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FRENCH'S STANDARD DRAMA

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The Acting Edition

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK

A STIRRING PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

W. ELSWORTH STEDMAN

Author of "The Confederate Spy," "Yankee Detective,"
"Green Mountain Boy," etc., etc.

Together with Cast of Characters, List of Properties, Description of Costumes, and full directions for Acting and Presenting the Play, producing Tableaux, etc.

SCENE: LOUISVILLE, KY. TIME: THE PRESENT.

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T. H. FRENCH
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28 WEST 23D STREET

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This is also kept in the large size only. In the centre is a door leading outside. On the left centre is a rustic fireplace, and the right centre is a window. On the wings are painted shelves, &c., to complete the scene. A box scene can be made by purchasing extra wings, as before described, and forming doors on each side. Price, with Border and one set of Wings, \$10.00; with Border and two sets of Wings, to form box scene, \$12.50.

The above Scenes, mounted, can be seen at 28 West 23d St., New York. Full directions accompany each Scene.

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THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK.

Cast of characters as first presented at the home of the author, Gobleville, Mich., February 12th and 13th, 1892, under his management.

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| ROBERT MORGAN (a retired farmer)..... | Mr. C. D. Myers |
| THOMAS MAXWELL (a villain)..... | Mr. R. G. Myers |
| FRANK MONTGOMERY (an innocent abroad)... | Mr. A. W. Myers |
| MIKE MCGANN (just from the Boggs)..... | Author |
| PETAH JOHNSING (a geman ob color) .. | Mr. Will Herman |
| EPHREHAM JOHNSING (chip ob de ole block) | Master Clark Millspaugh |
| ESQUIRE SNYDER | Mr. Harry Huff |
| JOHN, the Boatman..... | Mr. Harry Huff |
| BURK, the Detective..... | Mr. Harry Huff |
| MRS. ROBERT MORGAN..... | Mrs. C. D. Myers |
| MISS EDNA MORGAN..... | Mrs. Ella Millspaugh |
| BESSIE MORGAN, the Missing Child..... | Miss Jessie Millspaugh |
| MIGGIE (a nurse girl)..... | Miss Nina Myers |
| POLICE No. 37..... | J. M. Hall |

Sailors, Citizens, Police, etc.

Time of playing, two hours and thirty minutes.

NOTE.—This play can be cut down to half the characters by doubling ; or can be made more heavy by introducing specialties in the picnic scene, live mule and cart, etc. ; also scene of MIKE and the child rowing, songs and other specialties in street scene, etc.

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COSTUMES.

ROBERT MORGAN.—First Act: Ordinary suit. Parlor Scene: Dressing gown and slippers. On return from ride, light summer overcoat.

MAXWELL.—Long dark coat, high boots, wide-rimmed black hat, and long-haired wig. No change.

MONTGOMERY.—First Act: Short cutaway coat, high riding-boots, silk hat. Parlor Scene: Neat full-dress or evening suit. At picnic: Light overcoat.

MIKE.—Ordinary swallow-tailed coat, white vest, high collar, green necktie, red wig, and full red beard. At picnic: Long ulster and white plug hat. At court: Plain dark suit.

PETE.—Ordinary characteristic suit. At picnic: Large plaid ulster, white gloves, old plug hat.

OTHER GENTS.—Dressed to suit their stations—Sailors, Police, etc.

MRS. MORGAN.—Ordinary dark evening dress and outing suit for picnic.

EDNA.—Full riding habit, jockey cap or hat in First Act. Outing suit for picnic. Pretty evening dress for parlor.

MIGGIE.—Ordinary domestic suit.

BESSIE.—White dress for parlor, light blue for picnic.

PROPERTIES.

Rustic seat and table, letters for Mike, hat and shawl for Bessie, box for dinner at picnic, rope, riding-whip for Edna, large card for Pete's back, mouth organ for Ephreham, also spider and string, pistol for Mike, knife for Montgomery, photograph and eye-glasses for Morgan, hammock, wine bottles and glasses, police stars and clubs, red wig and beard for Mike, diamond for Bessie, large dummy to represent Ephreham.

BILL OF PLAY.

ACT I.—Exterior view at Robert Morgan's home. Ephreham and his aged sire. A dirty piece of trick. Miggie and her threat. The new guest. Mike is interviewed by his employer. "Tell me at once, or I'll throttle you." Edna and her admirer. Bessie, the Butterfly. Montgomery and Bessie have a pleasant chat with a mysterious ending. "You must have been dreaming." "My God, it's one of those stolen diamonds!" Sudden appearance of Maxwell. "I am here for satisfaction." Bessie brings the diamond. Foiled. Montgomery in anger. Held at bay.

SCENE 2.—Mike interviewed by Maxwell. "I'll give you five thousand dollars if you will remove Bessie Morgan from

the face of the earth." The plot and conspiracy. Mike yields to the temptation. One thousand down. Mike wants a quart av poor whiskey. The same old story—"Whiskey did it." Maxwell and Montgomery have a midnight talk. "Hark! what's that?" My God, it's Morgan's ghost!

TABLEAU.

ACT II.—Parlor at the home of Robert Morgan. Mrs. Morgan's interrogation. Morgan's moral sermon. Arrival of Montgomery and Edna. That fatal photograph. "Zouah hosses am ready, sah." Bessie recognizes the picture. Plan for the picnic. The afternoon drive. Montgomery in an embarrassing situation. Proposes a stroll in the park. Mike appears on the scene. "How very polite you are, Micky." Mike and the Detective. Mike makes a blunder, and wants to "foite wid some wan." "Ye see, sor, when Maxwell be in Morgan be out." Maxwell misleads the officer. Montgomery and Edna have a falling out. Jealousy. "I will think *twice* before I believe that." "There's the door, sir; will you be kind enough to leave this room?" Rash words. Caught in the act.

PICTURE.

ACT III.—Picnic at the lake. Maxwell pleads for his friend. "Further words are useless; he has sacrificed my friendship." Maxwell tries the scare act, and scores a point. "Where is your proof, sir?" Mrs. Morgan's sympathy. Pete and the other mule come with the dinner. "Lemuel" gets on his dignity, and kicks out the dashboard. Mike promises Bessie a ride on the lake. Trouble in the dinner-box. "Well, what koind av a lunch de ye call thot, onyway?" Ephreham comes to the picnic in a peculiar way. A rough joke.—Wine for six. Maxwell as a poet. Bessie goes with Mike for a ride on the lake. Edna interviews her father. Consternation. "Sir, would you dare intimate that Henry Morgan was dishonest?" Montgomery plays a sharp game. "My God, man, if this be true I'm ruined!" Maxwell brings the clinching proof. Morgan a peniless man. Mike comes back without Bessie. Consternation in camp. "For God's sake, man, don't drive me mad!" Disciples of the Lynch law. Mike in a bad fix. Rescued by the police.

ACT IV.—Home again. Morgan in a perplexing situation. Pete offers to be sold to save the home. A forced marriage. Edna's sacrifice. Pete and the goblins. Squire Snyder. Astonished. The wedding and how it terminated. The denouncement. Thomas Maxwell and Frank Montgomery find their match. Diamond cut Diamond. "We're in the soup."

“Say, you white man, I want dem ten centses I owe you.”
 Happy dénouement. Good-night.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right—the actor facing the audience ; L., left ; C., centre ; R.C., right centre ; R.U.E., right upper entrance. L. 1st E., Left first entrance, nearest to the foot-lights ; R. 1st E., opposite, etc. Coming down, means coming to front of stage. Going up, means back of stage, etc.

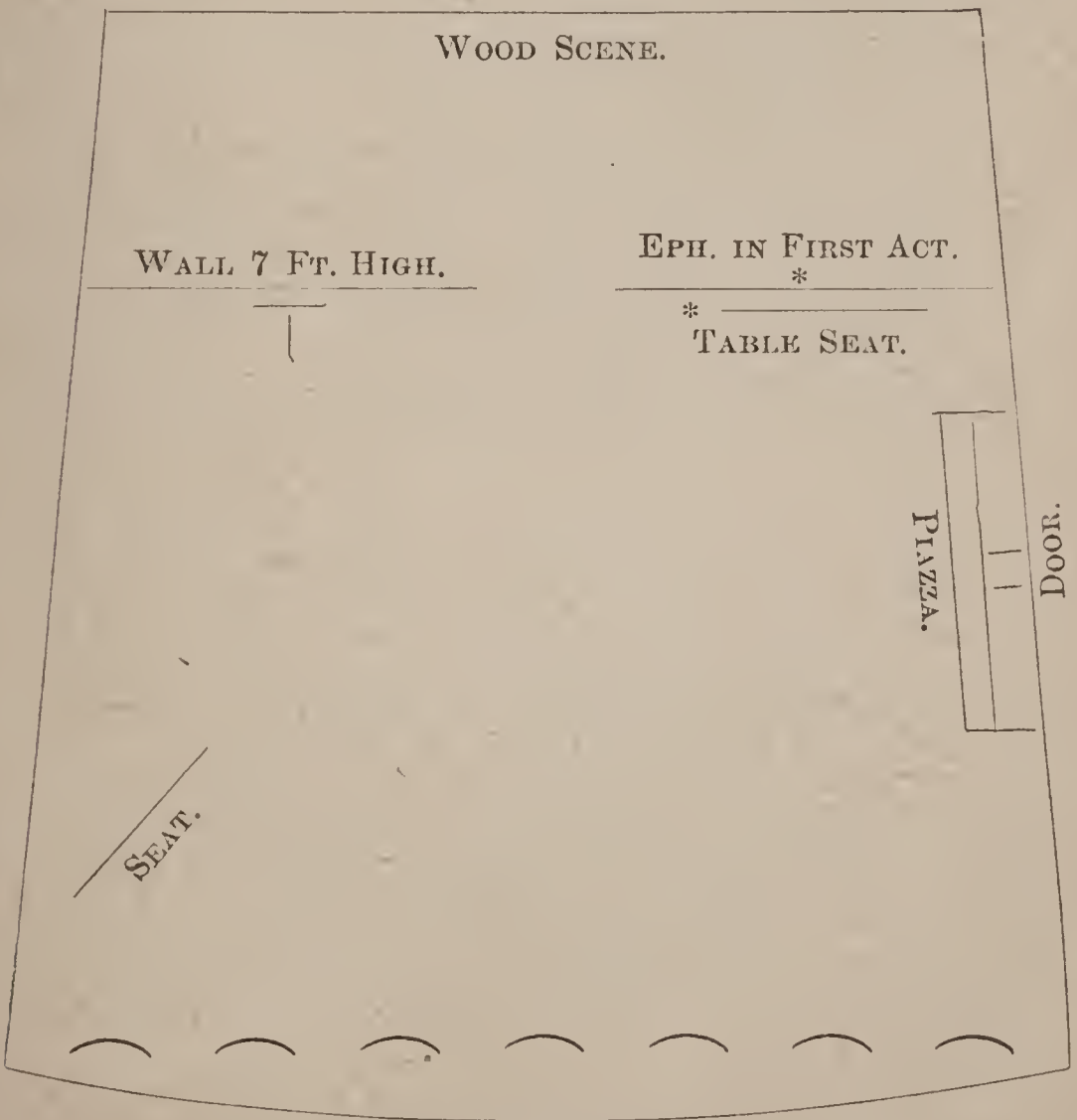


DIAGRAM IN FIRST ACT.

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Exterior view adjoining the home of ROBERT MORGAN. Wood scene, back wall, with opening seven feet high. (See Diagram across back.) Rustic seat L. 1st E., also one close to wall, L. U. E. Rustic stand, U. C. Front entrance to house, L. C. As curtain rises PETE discovered sleeping on seat by wall. After a pause, the face of EPHREHAM is seen to rise above the wall back of PETE. EPHREHAM looks over the wall at PETE, then takes a string from his pocket, to which is attached a large black spider (in resemblance). EPHREHAM lowers the spider down into the old man's face, who, after business of brushing away, springs quickly up in great fright. After a pause he discovers the grinning face of EPHREHAM above the wall.*

PETE. Look heah, you Ephreham ; how many times I done tole yer dat if you pesticate you ole fadder any mo, I gib you sich a warmin' dat you won't know who you mudder was. You's a disgrace to dis yer whole town. (EPHREHAM *laughs*.) Look heah, boy, I ain't foolin' wid you. You tink kaze I lofe you go for to hook some of de parson's watahmilions dat I sofen my ole heart ebery time. Now you git wat down from dar. I done tole you eleben times to keep ofen dat fence ; now I'ze gwan for to paddle ye. (*Exits C. EPHREHAM disappears. PETE heard outside calling.*) Heah, sah, you come back heah. Yo' know who yo' fadder be ! Yo' come back heah, sah. (*Enters C., and comes down gesticulating.*) I clar to goodness ef dat boy ain't run wid de white trash till he doan know any moah dan he fadder do. Ges you wait till I git my hans on dat coon.

Enter MICHAEL MCGANN, R. 2 E.

MIKE (*aside*). Oh, ho, ho ! Git on till the haythen nager (*to PETE*). Heh, nager, de ye want to foite some wan ? Oh, I don't kno !

PETE (*indignant*). Say, you white man, who you callin' nig-gah ? I broke you jaw you done call me niggah.

MIKE. Oh, come off wid ye ! D'ye think Oi'd be pelaverin' wid the loikes av ye ? Phere's the masther ?

PETE. You spoze I'ze gwan to tole you whar Mars Morgan be ? No, sah ; kaze I doan know.

Enter MIGGIE, c., in time to hear the last.

MIGGIE. Then go and find him and tell him he wants you.

PETE (*going to c.*). Yas, Missus Miggie ; I'ze gwan.

MIG. See here, Pete, that imp of darkness of yours got in the conservatory this morning, and pulled up a lot of choice flowers ; and if I catch him I'll whip the black all off his hide.

PETE. Yo' can't ketch dat coon, missus. I done try fo' de las' week to git my hans on dat chile. [*Exits, c.*]

MIKE. Miggie, pheres the masther ?

MIG. If it's Mr. Morgan you want, I saw him on the walk with a stranger as I came here.

MIKE. A stranger ! Phat did he look loike ?

MIG. Why, he looked like a gentleman, to be sure.

MIKE. Now, Miggie, don't be afther pokin' fun at me. Was he black or white ?

MIG. Neither one.

MIKE. Oh, dear, dear, dear ! You make me toired. Av the mon wasn't black or white, phat in the name av Saint Patrick was he ?

MIG. He was dark complected and wore a black mustache. Now, why are you so inquisitive ? Are you afraid it's the sheriff ?

MIKE. Oi didn't know but it moite be the fool-killer, an' he'd be takin' ye away from us.

MIG. Oh, you horrid thing ! [*Exits, l. c., into house.*]

Enter ROBERT MORGAN and THOMAS MAXWELL, c.

MORGAN. It was always a great mystery to me how my brother died insolvent, when we all supposed him to be one of the solid men of Wall Street.

MAXWELL. He was in excellent circumstances when I was last there, but such is often the case with speculators. Your brother was probably stricken down when financial matters were against him. Sometimes a speculator will meet with reverses, and will be held back from financial ruin by the merest chance, and perhaps next day be a millionaire.

MORG. (*to MIKE*). Michall, show this gentleman to a room, and return to me. Mr. Maxwell, make yourself at home, and I will join you later.

MAX. You are very kind, Mr. Morgan, and I appreciate your hospitality.

MIKE. This way, sor.

[*Starts to exit, l. c., followed by MAXWELL.*]

MORG. Michael, have you been for the mail ?

MIKE. (*producing letters*). Oh, begorra, Oi forgot that Oi have some phat ones for yez !

[*Gives letters, and exits with MAXWELL, L. C.*
(MORGAN *sits on rustic seat, near table, opens letter, and reads aloud.*)

“PINKERTON’S NATIONAL DETECTIVE AGENCY, NEW YORK.
“*To Robert Morgan, Esq., Louisville, Ky.*

“DEAR SIR : We have at last succeeded in locating the man whom we believe to have been implicated in the murder of Lord Burton at your brother’s house. We have secured a photo, and are having some copies made, one of which will be forwarded to you, probably by next mail. Please advise us at once if you recognize it to be the likeness of any one you have ever met.

“Respectfully yours,

“R. PINKERTON, Superintendent.”

(MORGAN *whistles in surprise, lays letter on the table as MIKE enters, L. C.*)

MORG. Michael, you stated when you hired to me, one year ago, that you had been in my brother’s employ before his death.

MIKE. Yes, sor, Oi was, sor, before he doid ; he didn’t need ony servant atherward.

MORG. How long were you in his employ ?

MIKE. Iver since he was in Neyoirk.

MORG. Stuff and nonsense ! What did you do ?

MIKE. Oi was his confidential clerk, sor.

MORG. Confidential fiddlesticks ! Mr. Montgomery was his confidential clerk.

MIKE. But, sor, couldn’t he have two confidential clerks ? If Oi were as rich as he war, Oi’d have a dozen.

MORG. Man, you are either a fool or a knave. I was at my brother’s home many times, and I am positive that had you been there in his employ I should have seen you. My brother’s death was shrouded in mystery, and from your actions I am led to believe you know something of the cause. Now I am determined that you shall explain yourself, or I intend to know why not.

MIKE. Look here, Mither Morgan, ave ye’ll kape down that ugly temper av yours, an’ come down on a livil wid mesilf, Oi’ll prove to yez that Oi’m nather a fool or a knave, though ye may see something grane in me eye. Ye say that ye were at yer brother’s house and niver saw mesilf there. Now, Oi’ll show yez that me memory is the bist. The lasht toime yez came to yer brother’s house war in response to a telegram on the 29th av May, three years ago. Ye came on the 11 : 45 train. (MORGAN *deeply interested.*) Yer brother met ye at the station, an’ ye wint directly till the Asther House an’ Room 24.

MORG. (*quickly*). Stop ! How do you know this ?

MIKE. Because Oi were yer brother's confidential clerk, sor.

MORG. (*rising, seizing him by throat*). Explain this matter at once, or I'll throttle you.

MIKE (*throwing him off*). No ye won't, Mr. Morgan ; whin ye harm me ye sacrifice the bist friend ye have on earth.

MORG. (*sitting*). Perhaps I'm too hasty ; go on.

MIKE. Now, Mither Morgan, wasn't the subject av yer conversation that day *Murther* ?

MORG. (*springing up*). Sh ! (*Goes to c. and looks out.*) Come to my library, where no one will hear us, and tell me how you came to know what I supposed was only known to my brother and myself, and (*pointing upward*) our God.

MIKE. Now ye talk loike a sinsable mon ; come. (*Starts to go ; meets EDNA MORGAN and MR. MONTGOMERY. MIKE makes a low courtesy and passes out as they enter.*)

EDNA (*to MORGAN*). Oh papa, we've had just the loveliest canter over to Woodside and back, and Prince behaved like a major to-day.

MORG. Glad to know you had a pleasant ride. Were you ever over that road before, Mr. Montgomery ?

MONT. Never befoie to-day. The scenery is just grand.

EDNA. I'm afraid I nearly talked you to death.

MONT. On the contrary, I think such pleasant companionship is calculated to prolong one's years ; I'm not so easily exterminated as you think.

EDNA. Papa, Mr. Montgomery has been telling me all about poor Uncle Henry. You know, he was uncle's confidential clerk.

MORG. Yes, I remember ; and, by the way, there's a gentleman here who was once a great friend of my Brother Henry. He came here to make some inquiries concerning his death, and I've begged him to remain as our guest over Sabbath. You may perhaps know of him, Mr. Montgomery ; his name is Maxwell.

MONT. (*striving to appear calm*). The name sounds familiar, though I can't just place such a person.

MORG. You'll meet him at dinner ; and that reminds me that I have an appointment at this hour, and beg you will excuse me.

EDNA. Papa, cannot you remain while I change my habit ?

MORG. Here comes Bessie ; Mr. Montgomery can't get lonesome in her society. (*Bessie runs in at c. with a jumping rope.*) Here, my little butterfly, you are just in time to entertain Mr. Montgomery till your cousin's return. [*Exit, L. C.*]

MONT. Yes ; Bessie and I are old friends.

EDNA. Then you will enjoy a nice tête-à-tête till my return. (*Starts to leave, L. C., MONTGOMERY sits, and proceeds to light cigarette.*)

BESSIE (*running after EDNA, who waits at exit*). Cousin Edna, you havn't given me a kiss to-day. (*EDNA kisses her and exits. BESSIE returns and climbs on seat beside MONTGOMERY.*)

BESSIE. Oh, Mr. Montgomery, won't you tell me a story? You used to tell me stories when you lived at our house; don't you remember?

MONT. Oh, yes, I remember well; but I thought you were only a wee little girl at that time, and would forget before this.

BESSIE. Oh, no; I haven't forgotten; and I remember that awful night when the nice old gentleman was killed at our house. Wasn't that dreadful?

MONT. I was away at that time on my vacation.

BESSIE. But you were there that night, 'cause I saw you pass through my room, and you went out at the window.

MONT. (*much excited*). Why, Bessie, you are certainly laboring under a mistake. I was an hundred miles away. You must have been dreaming.

BESSIE. It was no dream, for I saw you drop something, which glittered in the moonlight, and after you were gone I climbed out of bed and picked it up, and it was the prettiest little stone I ever saw. I've got it yet.

MONT. (*starting to his feet*). Oh heaven, it's one of those stolen diamonds!

BESSIE. Are you ill, Mr. Montgomery?

MONT. (*trying to recover himself*). Oh, no; just a slight pain in my head. I'm subject to them.

BESSIE. Shall I go for Cousin Edna's smelling bottle?

MONT. I'm all right now, Bessie; but tell me, have you ever mentioned this matter to any one?

BESSIE. No, sir; there was so much excitement next day that I forgot it. Then I was sent here, and after that poor papa was drowned, and then I thought I had better keep it, and maybe I would see you some day and give it back.

MONT. (*nervously*). That's right; you are a brave little girl.

BESSIE. My mamma always told me it was very naughty to keep things that belonged to another, and I'll go right now and get it.

MONT. That's a good little girl; go (*she starts to go*); but say, Bessie, don't let any one see you have it or give it to me.

BESSIE. Are you afraid they will think you stole it, and will take it from you?

MONT. Sh! don't talk so loud, Bessie; go, now, and hurry back; that's a good girl. [*She exits, L. C.*]

MONT. (*coming down and speaking very slowly*). Her mother taught her it was wrong to steal. How well do I remember the precepts of my mother—peace to her ashes!—and the lessons I learned as I knelt at her knee, one of which burns in my memory night and day—"Thou shalt not kill"! Oh heaven, that I were a boy again! But, no, that can never be. I spurned

a father's warning and a dear mother's prayers and tears, and to-day I am a—(*starts*). No, it shall not be so. A man is innocent until he is proven guilty. (*Striking an attitude.*) I defy the world to prove that I am a murderer. (*Returns to seat, and discovers letter on table, U. C. ; looks cautiously around, then reads to himself after a pause.*) Already the hounds of the law are on our track. That photograph must never reach Mr. Morgan's hands. Forewarned is forearmed. Let me see, this is dated the 18th. (*Stands, c., and looks at letter again. MIKE comes quietly in c. and stands behind him, and gently taps him on shoulder.*)

MIKE. Av ye plaze, the masher wud loike thot lether.

MONT. (*starting violently, pauses, then hands letter to MIKE, who turns to go*). See here, my man, I owe you an apology for looking at that letter ; please not mention it to your master.

MIKE. All roite, sor ; Oi'll kape it entoirely to mesilf, unless Oi happen to shpake av it.

MONT. (*giving a coin*). Here's a silver dollar to seal your tongue with.

MIKE. Oi'm as dumb as an истер, sor ; Oi'd be dumb fer a whole year, af every toime Oi'd shpake some wan wad give me a dollar to kape shtill. [*Exits c.*]

Enter TOM MAXWELL, L. C., to MONTGOMERY, who is at c., looking after MIKE.

MAX. Montgomery !

MONT. (*starting in surprise*). Tom Maxwell, why are you here ?

MAX. To find you, my lark. Who was that chap you were just talking with ?

MONT. (*sitting*). Oh, that was one of the servants !

MAX. Are you as generous with all the servants as with this one ? The last time we met, if my memory serves me, you were dead broke. You must have struck it rich since then.

MONT. What are you driving at ?

MAX. Well, sir, if it's necessary to drop a brick house on you in order to penetrate your thick skull and muddy brain, I'll tell you plainly that I'm onto your whole scheme. While concealed here, I not only saw you read that letter and buy the Irishman off with your silver dollar, but I heard your whole conversation with the child in regard to the diamond ; and now, Frank Montgomery, I demand to know why you lied to me on the night we did that job, when you swore to me that you did not find the diamonds we expected to get from our victim.

MONT. (*nervously*). Don't speak so loud, Tom ; some one will hear you.

MAX. (*coming nearer*). Some one be blowed ! I came here for satisfaction, either in my part of that swag or in a way that will cause you to regret that you were ever born.

MONT. (*rising and standing very straight*). Well, now, Thomas Maxwell, what do you propose to do?

MAX. Demand half those diamonds at once.

MONT. And suppose I should refuse?

MAX. Then I swear I will avenge this insult before you are a day older.

MONT. I think I comprehend your threat; but let me tell you two can play at that game. You had better plan some other method for gaining your purpose, for by brutal force you'll not. What are your claims against me?

MAX. You know what my claims are. You came to me on the evening before we committed that deed, and said Lord Burton was a guest of your employer, Henry Morgan, and that you had positive knowledge that Burton had twenty thousand dollars in diamonds concealed about his person, and you explained how you made the discovery.

MONT. Well, what does that signify now?

MAX. Just this, my covey. After we had planned and executed that job, and I had trusted you to look after the swag, you had the effrontery to tell me that a few paltry dollars were all you found; but I never believed you, and your talk with the child, a few minutes ago, confirms my suspicion. Now, in the face of all this, I demand half the spoils—ten thousand dollars—and your answer must be soon and to the point.

MONT. (*after a pause*). Well, as you hold the winning cards, I am compelled to submit. Meet me at twelve o'clock to-night, at this place, and I'll have the diamonds with me.

MAX. Never! You deceived me once, and would do so again if I give you the chance.

MONT. Well, what can I do? I haven't them with me.

MAX. Then I will go with you to get them. I don't propose to lose sight of you.

MONT. Very well; I will do that on one condition.

MAX. Name it.

MONT. That you never trouble me again.

MAX. Don't you need my services in the game you are now playing?

MONT. Explain yourself.

MAX. Oh, I am not as verdant as you think me! You are trying your level best to woo and marry Miss Edna for Henry Morgan's money, which goes to her should his own little daughter not live to use it.

MONT. But the child *does* live, and enjoys the best of health.

MAX. That is just why you need my services.

MONT. And do you think I've become so degraded as to resort to such means to win fortune? I would not harm that dear little child for the wealth of India.

MAX. (*sneeringly*). Oh, no; *you* wouldn't harm a mouse;

but if the child was to sicken and die, leaving your wife sole owner of her uncle's estate, you would be only too glad. Now, pard, you have only to win the hand of fair Edna, and pledge to me that when she is sole possessor of her uncle's estate you will favor me with five thousand pounds, and you need give no further thought to the matter.

MONT. Maxwell, you're a devil.

MAX. Perhaps I am, but you are no angel. You had better call it a go.

MONT. I can't do it, Tom. I know my life has been one grand round of crime, but I'm going to reform. Come with me, and I'll get your half of that swag.

MAX. But suppose you should reform, and should succeed in marrying Miss Edna, and should suddenly find yourself possessor of the estate, you wouldn't mind helping an old pard, would you?

MONT. Tom, why do you tempt me in this way? You know I would help you as a friend, but I would never consent to intrigue.

MAX. (*laughing and slapping MONTGOMERY on shoulder*). Frank, you're a clever lad. Let's have the diamonds.

MONT. And you will leave here at once?

MAX. Yes, this very night. [*Both exit, R. 1 E.*]

Enter MIKE, L. 1 E., very much amazed.

MIKE. Well, Oi'll be teetotally cat-clawed if that ain't a pair av foine birds. Murther an' blazes, phat's to be did wid the loikes av thim! Now, O'i don't want to be casting reflections on the gintlemen, but it's me private sintiments that they're not honest (*scratches his head*). Now, Oi've got something in my head. The day that Mither Montgomery is married to Miss Edna the wedding won't come off, be dad! Oi'll cook his dook so brown that he can't ate it. An' de ye think the dirty blaguards have been murtherin' the Lord av Burton fer his diamonds? An' me a-standin' there loike a bump on a log an' listenin' to thim a-talkin' abute it, an' a-bitin' me jaw to kape from swearin'! Now, Oi'll jist kape an eye on the lads, an' Oi won't say a woird to any one only phat Oi kape to mesilf.

OLD PETE (*heard outside, c.*). Whoa dar, Lemuel! whoa dar! Ephreham, you keep away from dat mule. Lof go dat mule's tail, you young fool niggah. Whoa dar, Lemuel! (*PETE runs in at C. with whip, etc., very much excited; turns round quickly and calls out, "Whoa dar, mule!" During the above a great noise should be made back of wall, like the kicking of a mule, EPHREHAM yelling, etc. Suddenly a dummy is thrown in the air, which appears to audience (as it shows above the wall) to be EPHREHAM kicked in the air by the mule. EPHREHAM comes in, c., bawling loudly, with clothes torn, etc.*)

PETE. Now, I guess you keep away from dat mule. Come heah, chile, an' lof me see ef you neck am broke. Whar did de mule kick ye? (EPHREHAM *puts hand on top of his head.*) On de top of yer cocanut, eh? Did it hurt you, honey?

EPH. Yas; it doan hurt much, but it knock de shoes ofn dat mule's foot. (EPHREHAM *climbs on rustic seat, and proceeds to blow on a mouth organ, as if nothing had happened.*)

Enter MAXWELL, R. 1 E.

MAX. Say, my colored friend, can you take me to the station in time for the evening train north? (*Looks at watch.*) You have forty minutes yet.

PETE. Can I tote you wid my mule, sah?

MAX. Yes; any way to get there. Hurry up.

PETE. Yas, sah; I'll go an' get dat mule right away im-megitly. Heah you, Ephreham, you go an' git you ole fadder some corn to ketch dat mule wid.

EPH. (*feeling his head.*) Say, boss, you mustn't fool wid dat mule's tail, else he shake hans wid yer nose; he's pow'ful handy wid his heels. [EPHREHAM and PETE both exit, c.

MAX. (*to MIKE on seat, R. 2 E., who pretends to be reading paper.*) Now, my man, I want a little information, which I think you can give. Will you answer a few questions?

MIKE. That Oi will, av it don't be too conflicting with me political views.

MAX. How long have you been in the employ of Mr. Morgan?

MIKE (*without looking up from his paper.*) Oi came here six months afther the death av Lord Burton.

MAX. (*starting.*) Of what?

MIKE. The murther av Lord Burton, sor. Did ye niver hear av that mon?

MAX. When did it happen?

MIKE. Shure, it's yersilf ought to know that as well as me.

MAX. (*aside.*) Can it be that fellow mistrusts me? (*To MIKE.*) What did you know of that affair?

MIKE (*laying down paper.*) Phat did I know? (*With confidential air.*) Ken ye kape a secret, sor?

MAX. Yes; you are right I can.

MIKE (*resuming his paper.*) So ken Oi.

MAX. Come down to business, and I'll pay you well for it. What wages do you earn here?

MIKE. Oi earn more than Oi git, be dad!

MAX. Well, how much do you get?

MIKE. Oi git all Oi ken, sor; thrust me fer that.

MAX. Never take anything that don't belong to you, I suppose?

MIKE. That's none av yer business, sor.

MAX. Oh, don't be touchy! I'm up to snuff myself, and I can put you in a way to make a small fortune in one day, if you can keep dark.

MIKE. Kape dark, is it? Well, now, how the devil ken a mon kape dark in the day-toime?

MAX. Keep mum, lay low, do the work I give you, and ask no questions.

MIKE. Oh, Oi see! Yer a speculator, an' 'ave some vilage lots fer sale in beautiful Florida or some other city.

MAX. No; it's not that. I have a little work to do that's not strictly honest, and I'll pay you big money to assist me—that is, if you swear secrecy.

MIKE. Well, Oi don't know about that. Suppose Oi git mesilf in trouble, an' wake up some foine mornin' an' foind mesilf kilt entoirely?

MAX. No danger if you keep mum and follow my instructions.

MIKE (*throwing down paper*). An' phat moite they be?

PETE (*heard outside talking to mule*). Whoa, Lemuel! Heah, Ephreham, you come an' hole dis yar mule; den ye can come to de kere station wid you ole fadder an' de odder white man.

MAX. (*to MIKE*). Meet me here at midnight, and I'll tell you all about it.

MIKE. But, sor, Oi thot ye were goin' on the train?

MAX. Only a blind; I'll be here on time. Will you meet me?

MIKE. Yes, sor; Oi will, sor.

Enter PETE, c., dressed in a long wister; big figure.

PETE. De mule am ready, sah.

MAX. All right. (*To MIKE*.) Mum is the word; don't fail me; there is wealth in it for you. (*PETE turns to go, c., when a large card is discovered on his back; reads, "Korn for Sail."*)

MAX. (*taking card off and giving to PETE*). Hold on here, man, what is all this?

PETE (*holding it up and viewing it in disgust*). Dat chile am boun' to bring his ole fadder's gray hars down to de grave.

[*PETE and MAXWELL exit, c.*]

MIKE (*starting to go, l. c.*) Oh, moy! oh, moy! There's mischafe in the air. Phat ken the mon want av me in the middle av the noite, onyway? Oh, dear, Oi'm afraid there's trouble a-brewin', but Oi'll kape me woird, for there's money in it!

Enter BESSIE, L. U. E.

MIKE. Ah, there, me darlin'! Where are yez afther goin' now?

BESSIE. Where is Mr. Montgomery ?

MIKE. Oi don't know, me lass. Phat do yez want av him ? Phat 'ave yez got in yer hand ? (BESSIE puts one hand behind her and shows open hand.) Oh, but let me see the ither hand ?

Enter MONTGOMERY, R. 1 E.

MONT. She has nothing of yours ; just go about your business and let her alone. Give it to me, Bessie.

MIKE (*stepping between them*). Oi wonder av she will. Bessie, give me that ye 'ave in yer hand. (*She gives diamond.*) Now, go in the house directly.

[BESSIE exits, L. C. MIKE starts to follow, when MONTGOMERY draws a knife and springs toward him. MIKE quickly presents pistol. Tableaux closed in by street scene.]

SCENE II.—*Street on public drive. OLD PETE crosses stage from R. to L., gesticulating and calling to an imaginary person in the distance.*

PETE. Heah you, Ephreham, come back wid dat mule! You gwan to make you ole fadder walk clar home ? Come back heah! I clar to goodness, I hab to sen dat coon to de house ob inspection.

[*Exits, L., or if the person be a good singer, he can linger and sing, or deliver an oration, then exit, L.*]

Enter MAXWELL and MONTGOMERY, R.

MONT. Maxwell, I thought you were to leave town to-night ?

MAX. Can't a man change his mind if he wishes ?

MONT. Not in this case without breaking his word ; but I'm glad you didn't go, Tom ; there's a storm brewing, and I shall need your assistance, after all. You heard my conversation with the child in regard to the diamond ? She did her part like a little major, but was intercepted by that infernal Irishman, who took the diamond from her hand and held me at bay with a revolver. Now, what's to be done ? The child is liable to tell her story at any time, and that Irish devil is sure to squeal on us, if he hasn't already, and I think we had better make ourselves scarce at once.

MAX. Pshaw! What a tender foot you are! Just swear to stand by me, and I'll manage matters all right.

MONT. But hold on, Tom ; here is still another eye-opener. (*Produces photograph from his pocket.*) Pinkerton has sent your photograph to Mr. Morgan as one of the suspects in the Burton murder.

MAX. Thunder and blazes, things are warming up in great shape! But how did you come by this?

MONT. That letter you saw me reading explained that it would be here by this mail. I took in the situation, and told Morgan this evening that I would bring his mail from the office, as I had business down-town. He gave me the key to his lock box, and on receiving the package, I carefully removed the photograph, and replaced it by one of a friend of mine now living at Montreal.

MAX. Well, that's cool and clever. Let's be getting on, or some one will be piping us. There's some fine figuring to do if we steer clear of the nailers. [Both exit, L.]

Enter MIKE, R.

MIKE. Oi'm out on a promenade this avenin' fer the good o' me health. Oi caught a bad cold in me head lasht noight, shlaping wid me ears open. To-noite Oi expect to shlope wid both me two eyes open. Oi've got an' apintment to fillfull to-noite at twelve o'clock, an' av it makes me as rich as the mon said it wad, wont Oi put on shtyle! Oi'll wear me hat on me head slaunch ways, like thot. *(Puts hat on one side.)* Oi'll go down to the Talapoosa House an' buy some av Brown's best cigaroots, an' Oi'll have quail on trust, be dad! Oi must be on toime an' kape me woird good. [Exits, L.]

SCENE III.—*Same as Scene I., lights down. MIKE sitting on rustic seat at back.*

MIKE. Oh, me! oh, moy! This is a great toime o' noight fer a respectable Irishman to be prowlin' around loike a hungry lion, seekin' whom he may devour some wan. *(Striking an attitude.)* This be the toime o' noite when whiskey walks abroad an' graveyards groan. Phat will Oi do to amuse mesilf? Av Oi smoke me old pipe, some wan will see the loite. Oi know phat Oi'll do; Oi'll 'ave a game av base-ball all to mesilf. *(Plays an imaginary game of catch for about two minutes.)* *(See NOTE.)* Arrah! but av thot mon don't come soon Oi'll make a home run, an' whin he arrives he'll foind the game is up an' the stakes drawn from the treasurer.

Enter MAXWELL, R. 1 E., stops short and motions MIKE to come.

MIKE takes a big horse pistol from under his coat, and holding it behind himself, advances cautiously.

MAX. Are you sure every one has retired for the night?

NOTE—If nicely done, the imaginary game is sure to take well. The stage should always be in state of semi-darkness, when the audience will almost imagine they see the ball as it is caught and thrown by the players. Occasionally he should appear to miss the catch, when he will face the other way and catch it from there. A great many manœuvres can be thought of by the actor if anything of a mimic.

MIKE. All but you and Oi ; a respectable Irishman and a villain.

MAX. Save your compliments for future use. I thought I saw the shadow of a man as I came up the path.

MIKE. That, sor, be the ghost av Henry Morgan, who war murdered in Neyorik three years ago. Me mashter war his brother, an' ivery noite at twelve his ghost comes back an' walks these premises jist as if he couldn't shlope in his wathery grave.

MAX. What do *you* know of his grave? Were you there?

MIKE. Not in the grave, no, sor ; but Oi war not afar off when he war murdered.

MAX. Bosh ! Henry Morgan suicided.

MIKE. How de ye know he suicided?

MAX. How do you know he was murdered?

MIKE. Because Oi saw him wid my two looking eyes.

MAX. I like a moderate liar, but you suit me too well. What have you behind you there?

MIKE. A phistol.

MAX. What are you afraid of?

MIKE. Nothing, sor ; but afther listenin' to the murtherin' plans av ye an' that shlpalpen on til the sthreet Oi wint home an' got me gun, an' av ye thry ony av yer tricks on me Oi'll be aven wid ye, do ye moind?

MAX (*nervously*). I don't understand. When did you listen to me talking on the street?

MIKE. Oh, me hearty, Oi'm on to yer toime, so yez bether drop the subject an' come on til business. Phat de ye want av me, ony way?

MAX (*aside*). This is getting interesting. (*To MIKE.*) What would you say if I should offer you two thousand dollars to put some one out of the way?

MIKE (*speaking slowly*). Two thousand dollars to put some one out av the way ! Oi wad say ye are a blashted fool for makin' av the offer, an' Oi'd be a dom fool av Oi axcepted it, an' besides, thot depends who thot wan was, an' av the two thousand war good or bogus.

MAX. The money is all right, and the victim is only a child.

MIKE. No, sir ; Oi don't want the job. De ye take me fer a fool?

MAX. You couldn't make money faster.

MIKE. Yas, an' git hung ! Phat in blazes wad Oi do wid two thousand dollars afther Oi was kilt entoirely ? Why don't ye do the job yersilf an' save the money to buy off jury men wid ?

MAX. I'll go you five hundred better.

MIKE. Who is the child?

MAX. Will you promise to keep this secret while you live?

MIKE. Oi will that.

MAX. Swear. (MIKE *lifts up one hand.*) Now, remember, sir, if you ever dare even to give a hint of this to any one I'll shoot you down like a dog. Do you understand?

MIKE. Oi think Oi do. Yes, sor, Oi'll be as dead as any ither dog av ye shoot me down.

MAX. Well, here is the long and short of it. I'll give you twenty-five hundred dollars if you will effectually remove (*pause*) Bessie Morgan from the face of the earth. Your money is ready as soon as the work is done.

MIKE (*much surprised*). Be the howly mither av St. Patrick, de ye take me fer a Hungarian donkey? Bedad av this auld phistol war loaded Oi'd be afther pullin' the thricker on ye.

MAX. I'll make it even money—three thousand dollars.

MIKE. Three thousand dollars an' ninety-nine years in jail! Oh, no; Oi'd rither be ginerall roustabout fer Mистер Morgan all me loife.

MAX. There is no need of its ever being known. Didn't you ever do a mean job in your life?

MIKE. Niver but once, when Oi thumped Tim O'Harrigan on the head wid a bit av a stune and tuk his gould watch that war given him by his uncle, Teddy Malony, on his mither's soide; but de ye think Oi'd be afther confessing that same til the loiks av yersilf? Not much, me hearty.

MAX. Well, don't you see you can make enough at this job to buy a dozen gold watches and have a snug little fortune left? I'll make it four thousand. Come, now, if that isn't a liberal offer; and I'll do all the planning besides.

MIKE. Four thousand dollars! (*Long pause.*) Make it foive thousand an' a quart av whiskey, an' Oi'll do the job.

MAX. Why the whiskey?

MIKE. Why, Oi'll drink the whiskey, an' the whiskey will do the murther; then Oi'll be innocent; don't ye see?

MAX. Yes, I see the point.

MIKE. No pint about it, sor. It must be a quart. Then Oi'll git full up til me neck, an' av Oi'm caught the jury will say the mon war drunk an' ain't accountable fer the deed.

MAX. All right. Five thousand dollars and a quart of good whiskey.

MIKE. Oh, naw; oh, naw, you can't come that game on me.

MAX. (*surprised*). What game?

MIKE. Oi don't want ony av yer good whiskey. Oi want bad whiskey—forty-rod-bust-yer-head; something wid two murthers an' a dog foite in wan quart.

MAX. And that you shall have—the worst I can find. (*Aside.*) If I have to add arsenic myself.

MIKE. What may yer plans be?

MAX. Just this. Now listen: The family are to have a basket picnic at the lake in a day or two, and of course you will drive one of the carriages. After lunch induce the child to

go for a row out on the lake with you, and just before you go out on the water get her to drink a little wine. I will see that you are provided with an opiate powder, which you can drop in the wine unobserved; then if she falls asleep and tumbles into the water, who is to blame? Do you catch on?

MIKE. Oi think Oi do; yes, sor.

MAX. And you will carry out your part of the business without further advice?

MIKE. When Oi know it's sure about the cash.

MAX. (*giving money*). Here is one thousand as an evidence of good faith, and when the job is completed I will pay the rest—four thousand more.

MIKE (*taking money*). All roite, sor; an' wad it be interferin' wid yer private affairs av Oi ask yez a question?

MAX. What is it?

MIKE. Phat in blazes de ye want to be rid av the lass fer? Sure she's a swate little body, an' Oi don't loike to be the thavin' divil who ends her loife; but bedad Oi must be kapin' the wolf from the door in some way.

MAX. You have sworn to do this job and ask no questions. I couldn't explain my motives anyway, but after the job is done I'll tell you all about it. You had better go now. I'm going back to my hotel.

MIKE. All roite. Don't forget the whiskey. (*Goes to L. C., aside.*) Oh, dear, dear, but that man is a villain; so an Oi.

Exits L. C. MAXWELL goes to C. and looks out. MONTGOMERY comes on at R. 1 E., crosses over and looks over MAXWELL'S shoulder. Then both sit on rustic seat.

MONT. Tom, I'm afraid you've made a mistake in using that fellow. He is liable to blow on us, and I'm afraid he will do a botch job and get us both into the soup.

MAX. You are too much of a matter-of-fact man, Montgomery. Just leave the business to me, and we'll pull out all right. I've planned to dispose of the girl and the Irishman, too; and if he squeals I am prepared to prove an alibi. He knows too much of the affairs for our safety. Do you know that rascal piped on us on the street and saw you show me the photograph and heard all of our conversation?

MONT. Great Scott! Is that a fact?

MAX. Yes; and if my plans don't fail he will dig his own grave. I paid him one thousand dollars to-night, and have promised to pay him four thousand more after his work is done; but he won't ever need the balance.

MONT. But, Tom, where did you get the money? I thought you were hard pushed.

MAX. I lifted it from Mr. Morgan's safe about an hour ago.

MONT. Stole it from Morgan's safe?

MAX. (*laughing*). Oh, no. Gentlemen never call it stealing. I only appropriated it. Morgan was careless and left his safe unlocked, and I took occasion to explore its contents in such a way that will cast a suspicion on Mike.

MONT. Suppose Morgan should miss the money and instigate a search?

MAX. All the better. He'll find it in the Irishman's possession. Do you know where the fellow came from when he came here?

MONT. No ; but I can easily ascertain. I suppose the family must know.

MAX. I surmise it was from New York. If so, why not identify him as the man who was last seen in the boat with Henry Morgan?

MONT. Capital idea, Tom ; but how would that affect this case?

MAX. Find out all you can of the fellow and report to me, and I'll show you that it will affect this case.

MONT. I wish we were well out of this intriguing life we are leading. Someway of late I can think of nothing but Lord Burton and our crime, and many times at this hour in fancy I can hear that peculiar step of his in my room and that feeble voice as he cried for mercy.

MAX. Don't be a blasted fool, Frank. I wouldn't flinch if his ghost should come and sit on my bedpost every night.

MONT. (*coming to centre of stage*). Hark ! What is that noise ?

MAX. (*joining him*). That is only the sougning of the winds. Your nerves are at fault ; you had better retire at once.

MONT. Sh ! (*points to back wall*). Look, Tom, look !

MAX. What is it, Frank ? I can see nothing.

MONT. My God ! it's Lord Burton ! (*Drops on one knee and covers face. MAXWELL staggers back and turns his face away as a scene is shown in the wall as per note.*)

SLOW CURTAIN.

NOTE.—To represent the vision best a large hole should be cut in the back (set) wall at point marked T in diagram on front pages, and nicely covered with mosquito netting or some very open texture ; then painted like the rest of the wall, being careful not to fill the meshes too full of paint. When there is no light back of curtain the netting is not seen, but when the stage is dark and a light is used back of the wall, the netting and part of the wall seem to disappear, and whatever is immediately back of it shows plainly. To show the vision, let some one dress like an old gentleman in a night-robe, and stand just back of the net. Have an attendant on either side concealed by wall, and with each a strong lamp and reflector, which must be turned up suddenly when MONTGOMERY gives the cry, "My God ! it's Burton !" The whole force of the light should be directed toward the face and held so till curtain is down. If amateurs do not wish to go to the extra trouble, a section of the wall can be easily made to drop out, showing the vision the same. Red fire can be used to make the light if wished. The person in the vision must remain perfectly motionless while the light is on. It will heighten the effect if, during the tableau, a distant bell is heard to strike the hour of twelve.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Parlor at the home of ROBERT MORGAN. Sofa, R. C. Table and easy-chairs, L. C. Large folding-doors back easy-chair, C. Furniture to suit the effect. MORGAN at table, reading paper. MRS. MORGAN in easy-chair, C. BESSIE on sofa, looking at picture-book.*

MRS. M. Robert, who is the gentleman who comes here so much of late ?

MORG. You refer to Mr. Maxwell, I suppose ?

MRS. M. I believe you introduced him as Maxwell. What is his business ?

MORG. He claims to be an extensive cattle ranchman from Texas. He was once a resident of New York and a great friend of brother Henry's—was there at the time of brother's disappearance, I believe. He was in the city, and hearing of me, he came out to make a call and some inquiries, and as he has the appearance of being a gentleman, I have invited him to call often during his stay.

MRS. M. Appearances are deceiving sometimes. I can't say that I like his looks.

MORG. That's not to be wondered at. Ranchmen, as a rule, have uncouth and rough exteriors, but many have true, honest hearts, worthy of respect.

Enter EDNA and MONTGOMERY, C.

EDNA. Excuse us. Will we intrude ?

MRS. M. (*laughing*). Oh, no, indeed. Your father was just delivering one of his moral sermons. (*EDNA sits on the sofa, MONTGOMERY sits near table, MORGAN lays aside paper and removes glasses.*)

MORG. I'm very glad you came, Mr. Montgomery. I've something I wish to show you. (*Takes photograph from pocket and hands to MONTGOMERY.*) Did you ever see that person ?

MONT. (*after pause*). No, sir, I never did.

MORG. Did you ever see the picture before ?

MONT. (*handing it back*). No, sir. Why do you ask ?

MORG. I thought by this inscription you might be a friend of the party. (*Reads aloud from back of photograph.*) Presented to my old friend, Frank Montgomery, 38 Pearl Street, New York, by Fred Durand.

MONT. (*very uneasy*). Let me look at that again, please. (*Takes photograph and looks at it for some time, then hands it back.*) Well, that is the most remarkable circumstance I ever saw. The name and even my street and number is correct, but I am positive I never saw either the picture or person it represents.

MRS. M. May I see it, Robert? Bessie, get the picture for auntie, will you?

BESSIE (*looking at the picture as she brings it*). Why, auntie, I saw that photograph in Mr. Montgomery's album when he lived at our home.

EDNA (*quickly*). Hush, Bessie! Come here. (*She comes.*) Do you wish to go with us to the lake to-morrow?

BESSIE (*clasping her hands*). Oh, my, yes! Can I go?

EDNA. I think so if the day is pleasant.

Enter PETE, c.

PETE. Massa Montgomery, you hosses am ready fo' de ride.

EDNA. Frank, I beg you will excuse me from riding this time, it's so very warm.

MONT. Certainly, Miss Edna. I'm not in the least particular. Pete, you may stable the horses again.

PETE. Yes, sah!

MORG. Pete, harness the horses to the carriage and drive to the north porch.

PETE. Shall I drike, sah?

MORG. Yes.

PETE. All right, sah. I'll hab 'em right dar. [*Exit* c.

MORG. (*rising*). Mrs. Morgan, will you accompany me for a drive? Let Bessie come, too.

BESSIE. Oh, goody! I'll get my wraps. [*Exits* L. U. E.

MRS. MORGAN rises, whispers something in EDNA'S ear, and exits

L. U. E. At same time MONTGOMERY comes down L., speaking back to MORGAN.

MONT. Just a word before you go, Mr. Morgan. (*MORGAN comes down.*) There are some circumstances connected with that photograph which compelled me to answer in the negative. I know more than I could admit before others. Walls have ears, you know. I will see you later and explain.

MORG. I was sure there was something wrong somewhere. I ought not to have mentioned it till I could see you alone. Will you see me in my library this evening?

MONT. Yes, and explain all.

MORG. I hope you will excuse our absence for a time?

MONT. Oh, certainly; enjoy life while you can.

BESSIE (*from outside calls*). Uncle Robert, the carriage is coming.

MORG. All right, my dear. [*Exits* L. U. E.

MONT. (*sitting in easy chair, c.*). Miss Edna, I presume you are not a little surprised at what you have just listened to.

EDNA. Frank, I was not only surprised, but I was never more mortified. Can you account for this terrible state of affairs? and did papa tell you how he came by that photograph?

MONT. No, he did not. Will you tell me?

EDNA. I prefer not to tell.

MONT. Edna, believe me, I had no intention of deceiving any of you. When I denied having any knowledge of the matter, circumstances over which I had no control prevented my answering differently.

EDNA. The circumstances must be very peculiar that will cause a man to tell a deliberate falsehood without a blush of shame.

MONT. I beg you won't judge me too harshly till I have explained.

EDNA. Pardon me if I seem hasty. I will listen to you now.

MONT. Very well. Before explaining, however, I must ask you a few questions in order that you may better understand what is to follow. (*MIKE appears at c., unobserved.*) In the first place, who is this Irish servant?

MIKE. Oi am an Irishman, sor. I war born among the grane boggs av auld Ireland, but Oi moight av been born in Amerika av Oi'd been a moind to. (*To EDNA.*) Av ye please, miss, me lady would loike to spake till ye at the kerridge door, an' she axed wad the gintleman axcuse ye fer a minnit.

EDNA (*going c.*). I will return soon. [*Exit c.*]

MONT. *to MIKE.* How exceedingly polite you are, Mickey.

MIKE. Oi know me place, sor. I always show respect to a lady or gintleman, or a villain in the guise of a gintleman.

MONT. (*rising angrily*). Does that insult apply to me, sir?

MIKE (*bowing*). Ye are the bist judge, sor. [*Exit c.*]

Enter MAXWELL, R. U. E.; crosses quickly over to MONTGOMERY.

MAX. There are breakers ahead, Frank. There's a spotter in town. I think it's one of Pinkerton's men. I was at the station when he came on the train and heard him ask the agent the way to Robert Morgan's house; then I followed him to the hotel and heard him order a livery team to be ready as soon as he can lunch. So I took occasion to skip up here ahead of him.

MONT. What can we do—skip out?

MAX. Skip nothing, old boy; we can play our cards just as fine as he can. Where is Mr. Morgan?

MONT. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and the little girl have gone for an afternoon drive. The young lady is home, and I expect her here any minute.

MAX. Can you get her for a walk? If so, I can manage the detective.

MONT. But say, Tom, I've got my foot into it again. That photograph of my friend, which I substituted for the one in the package, had some writing on the back which gives me dead away.

MAX. Well, if I ever in my life saw such a wooden-headed man as you are.

MONT. Yes, fool that I was, I never looked to see that the back was all right.

MAX. There's no use to cry now ; get out of it as best you can, and when you find it's no go we will skip the country ; but you may bet we'll do that Irishman before we leave.

MONT. Well, Tom, you had better leave, or Miss Edna will find you here. I will do the best I can, though I'm afraid I'll sink us both.

MAX. I'll go back to the conservatory where I came in, and after you and the gal are gone I'll come back.

MONT. And be discovered by that Irishman ?

MAX. Leave that to me.

[*Exits, R.U.E.*]

Enter EDNA, c.

MONT. (*aside*). Well, there's another hair's-breadth escape. By Jove! it's a wonder she didn't see Tom. (*To EDNA.*) You were called away rather abruptly. Do you never tire of that blundering Irishman ?

EDNA. We, of course, would prefer him to be more decorous ; otherwise he is all right and trustworthy.

MONT. You will be surprised when I tell you that he is connected with that photograph mystery of this evening.

EDNA. Well, really, in these days I am not surprised at anything ; but I am ready to listen to whatever you may have to say on the subject.

MONT. Would you like to stroll out in the park while we talk ? I am suffering from a severe headache this afternoon.

EDNA. You have my sympathy ; suppose we go to the conservatory ; it's always pleasant and cool in there at this time.

MONT. (*nervously*). I would prefer to go in the park if it will cause you no inconvenience. I don't wish to appear selfish in the matter.

EDNA. Oh, no inconvenience, I assure you. (*Looks out at c.*) Here comes Mike ; he will remain here until our return. (*Enter MIKE, c.*) Michael, we are going out for a short time. Will you remain here till our return ?

MIKE. So Oi will, Miss Edna. (*Sits in easy-chair, c.*)

MONT. (*aside*). Well, there is another obstacle to surmount.

EDNA. Frank, I'll get my hat and meet you at the gate.

[*Exit, L.U.E.*]

MONT. (*to EDNA*). Very well ; I will be there. (*To MIKE.*) After we are out, if you will steal away and go for my mail I'll pay you well for it.

MIKE. All roight, sor ; onything for a quarther.

MONT. Don't forget to go soon. [*Exits, c.*]

MIKE. (*looking after him*). Well, phat in the name av St. Pathrick Missus Edna can see thot's noice about that deacivin' varmint, Oi don't know. (*MAXWELL enters softly, and stands behind MIKE's chair.*) It do seem as av auld Nick war let loose, an' a-makin' this place his headquarters. Oi can always tell when the divil be close by me. Oi can fale it in me mara-bones.

MAX. (*slapping him on shoulder*). It's a wise child that knows its own father.

MIKE. (*springing up*). Oh, dear, dear, dear ; Oi thought Oi war kilt intoirely. Where the divil did the loikes av ye come from ?

MAX. Never mind where I came from ; I want to use you, and there is no time to be lost. A man will be here soon to see your master. You are to show him in, and tell him I am Mr. Morgan.

MIKE. Tell him you are Mither Morgan ?

MAX. Certainly.

MIKE. Then Oi'd be tellin' a loie ; for Mither Morgan be a dacent mon.

MAX. Will you do my bidding ?

MIKE. Suppose it war Mither Morgan himself ; bedad, and he'd be afther discharging me away widout ony warnin'. Oi don't know.

MAX. The fellow is a dude who is coming from town to see Mr. Morgan, and as he is away, I will do the business in his name ; do you understand ?

MIKE. Yes, sor ; the fellow is a dude. The dude will come from town to talk wid Mither Morgan. Mither Morgan is out, so you will talk wid the dude.

MAX. Exactly.

MIKE. Now, Oi'm to bring the dude intill the house an' say, This be Mither Morgan.

MAX. - That's right.

MIKE. Now you are Mither Morgan, me masther.

MAX. Yes, yes, yes !

MIKE. All roight, sor ; pay me lasht month's wages.

MAX. Oh, no ; my authority don't extend that far.

MIKE. (*sitting*). All roight for yez ; Oi woirk for the mon that pays me wages.

MAX. Thunder ! How much do you want ?

MIKE. Twenty, sor.

MAX. (*giving money*). Here's your cash ; now get yourself to the front door.

MIKE. (*going, c.*). Yas, sor. (*Aside.*) Drop a nickle in the slot and see the Irishman move. [*Exits c.*]

MAX. (*going c. and looking after him*). I've been in many a

hard racket and come out all right, but dern my buttons if this job don't begin to smell of sulphur. (*Looks out c. and calls.*) Here, you young ape over there, what are you doing? Come in here. (*EPHREHAM enters, c.*) What were you doing with that rustic seat?

Eph. Nuffin.

Max. What do you call nothing?

Eph. I war jest drivin' some pins in dar.

Max. You were fixing pins for some one to sit on, eh? You call that nothing?

Eph. My ole dad sets dar when he smokes, an' I jes' want ter git eben wid him, 'cause he gib me de gad dis inawnin'.

Max. So you were laying a trap to bring your old father to grief, eh? Has he any more suh interesting cubs as you are?

Eph. I ain't no cub.

Max. Do you want to earn a dime?

Eph. How much am dat?

Max. Why, ten cents.

Eph. Dat's accordin' how hard de work am.

Max. Go down by the big gate, and when you see your master coming, run here and tell me, and I'll give you ten cents.

Eph. Yas, sar; I'll make bettah time dan dad's mule.

[*Exits, c., quickly.*]

MIKE. (*heard outside.*) Here, ye little blaek divil, phat are ye up till now? Ave ye don't kape off these premises, Oi'll give ye the raps of Darby.

Enter MIKE and BURK, the detective.

MIKE. (*making a low bow.*) Av ye plase, Misther Morgan, here be a gintleman to see yez.

BURK. I suppose this is Robert Morgan?

MAX. Yes, sir. (*Pointing to a seat and sitting himself.*) To whom am I indebted for this call?

BURK (*giving card.*) I am sent here by our agency to interview you relative to your brother's death, also the murder of Lord Burton at his house. Did you receive the photograph we sent?

MAX. I did; yes, sir. It resembles no one I have ever met.

BURK. Do you know the whereabouts of one Frank Montgomery, once your brother's secretary?

MAX. No, sir, I do not. You certainly do not suspect him?

BURK. Not directly; no, sir; but he was seen in company with the man whom we believe to be principle in the crime.

MAX. Do you know his name?

BURK. He goes by the name of Maxwell, though that is probably only a *nom de plume*.

MAX. (*nervously.*) I think I may be able to assist you in lo-

cating both of them. I will get my hat and coat and accompany you to the city, where I will give you some clews.

[*Exits, L.U.E.*

BURK (*looking after him and taking a photo from his pocket*). By Jove! I'll bet ten to one that this is a picture of Morgan, instead of Maxwell. I'll just lay low and look into this matter a little. I guess, Mr. Man, if you will glance into a mirror you will see the fellow I want.

MIKE (*heard outside*). Howly Moses, General Jackson, and all the rist av the great men! Show me the mon phat wants to foit me.

[*Rushes in, c.*

BURK. Why, fellow, what's the matter of you?

MIKE. Matther is it, bedad! Oi'm kilt entoirely. O'i sit mesilf down on the blashted sate out there, an' be the mither av St. Pathrick Oi got struck wid loitnen. Tell Mистер Maxwell Oi'm gone fer the doctor.

[*Starts to exit, c.*

BURK. Hold on; you said, Tell Maxwell. Who is Maxwell?

MIKE. Why, the mon ye were talkin' wid. Oh, dear, dear, dear, Oi don't mane Maxwell, at all, at all; Oi mane Morgan! Ye see, mister, when Morgan be out, Maxwell be in.

[*Exits, c.*

BURK. Well, I guess this is my lucky day.

EPH. (*runs in c., bawling loudly*). Har dey am, boss! har dey am! (*To BURK.*) Whar am dat oder fellah?

BURK. What are you croaking about? Who do you want?

Enter MAXWELL, L.U.E.

MAX. What is the matter there, boy?

EPH. Massa Morgan am comin', an' I want dat ten centses.

MAX. (*angrily*). Get out of here, or I'll break your neck. (*To BURK.*) For reasons which I will explain later, I would not wish you to be seen here, so if agreeable, we will go by the back way.

[*Both exit, R.U.E.*

EPH. (*runs after them, loudly bawling*). Har, you white man, I want dat ten centses!

Enter MONTGOMERY and EDNA. She sits in easy-chair, c.

EDNA. Frank, did you know the gentleman with Mr. Maxwell? He seemed to know you.

MONT. I have no recollection of ever seeing him before—some speculator friend of Maxwell's, I presume; but to return to the subject. I expect to return to New York to-morrow, and would really like an answer before I go.

EDNA. Frank, I do not wish to doubt your word or believe you anything but a true, honest man; but your explanation concerning that photograph affair is not quite clear in my mind, and if it were I could answer only in the negative at this time, for I could not give my hand where the heart is not.

MONT. I am not surprised; I presume your heart is still with that New York dude, Jim Perrin.

EDNA. You are very complimentary, to say the least. Do you think to win your suit by such sarcasm ?

MONT. Beg pardon ; I ought not to speak so disparagingly of your friend ; but truly, I never think of that man without a feeling of contempt.

EDNA. And why contempt, pray ? Did Mr. Perrin ever do you an injustice ?

MONT. (*angrily*). Yes ; an injury I can never forget or pardon. Isn't it a fact that he came between us three years ago, and with soft speeches and oily tongue led you to believe I was a villain and himself an angel ?

EDNA. For shame, Frank ! Mr. Perrin never spoke aught of you in my presence during our acquaintance.

MONT. I will think twice before I believe that.

EDNA (*rising*). Mr. Montgomery, you had better think twice before you insinuate that I am telling an untruth ; and let me tell you, if you care for my respect you will drop this subject at once.

MONT. Edna, three years ago I first met you at your uncle's home. I fell desperately—yes, madly in love with you, and I had every reason to believe that my love was returned until young Perrin came. Then you grew cold and indifferent to me and deeply interested in my rival, who after completely captivating your heart ran away with pretty Rose Morton.

EDNA. Stop, sir ; you have abused me, and I have borne it in silence ; but I will not allow you to insult an absent friend in my presence. Mr. Perrin was a gentleman ; I wish I could say the same of you.

MONT. Rose Morton thought him a gentleman till he deserted her for still another.

EDNA (*angrily*). There's the door, sir ! Will you be kind enough to leave this room ?

MONT. When I am through talking to you I will go, but no sooner ; and let me predict that when I am done you will beg me to stay. I have tried all fair means to win your hand, and you have spurned my every advance. Now hear me ; at the end of next month you will be Lady Montgomery. (*She turns away.*) Come, now ; there is no use to fight the inevitable. My plans are laid, and in my vocabulary there is no such word as fail.

EDNA (*indignant*). Leave this house, sir, or I will call for help.

MONT. Yes, I'll go now, but I must have a parting kiss to remind me of this pleasant interview. (*She starts to leave, c. MONTGOMERY seizes her arm and undertakes to steal a kiss. She screams. MIKE comes quickly on at c., followed by MORGAN, MRS. MORGAN and BESSIE. MIKE catches MONTGOMERY by throat. EDNA goes into her mother's arms. Form picture as the curtain falls.*)

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Park or wood scene, showing bay or lake at back ; boats sailing, etc. ; children playing different games ; BESSIE discovered in hammock or swing, L. U. E., MIGGIE swinging her ; MRS. MORGAN in camp chair, R. U. E., looking off on bay with opera-glasses (or the act may open with several children swinging in a circle and singing, but should leave the stage after a chorus of laughter).*

MAXWELL and EDNA discovered sitting on rustic seat, R. 1 E. As curtain rises a chorus of laughter is heard, in which every one should join.

MRS. M. (to MIGGIE). Please not swing her too hard, Miggie ; she might fall. [Exits, R. U. E.]

BESSIE. That's enough, Miggie ; now let me swing you (*Business of swinging or playing games may proceed, but care must be taken that there be no noise to interrupt those who are speaking, and all should keep to the back part of the stage.*)

MAX. Miss Morgan, I do not uphold Mr. Montgomery for his actions last evening, and you are justified in feeling indignant ; yet as a friend of Frank's, I beg you to reconsider the matter, and give the lad a chance to speak in his own defense.

EDNA. Mr. Maxwell, further words are useless ; he has sacrificed my friendship. I had supposed Mr. Montgomery to be a gentleman, but his conduct yesterday proves him quite the reverse.

MAX. But suppose, Miss Morgan, I should tell you something that would cause you to reverse your decision and thank me for the information.

EDNA. That would be impossible.

MAX. It may seem impossible to you ; nevertheless, it is no idle boast, my dear young lady.

EDNA. Will you be kind enough to explain yourself ?

MAX. Only on condition that you will receive the knowledge quietly, as a scene would cause a commotion, to the detriment of your family.

EDNA (*rising*). Sir, if you have anything of importance to say, I will listen ; if not, you will excuse me.

MAX (*rising*). Suppose I tell you that every dollar your father is worth is at the mercy of the man you despise.

EDNA (*in astonishment*). What !

MAX. Is that a matter of importance to you ? (*Aside.*) Guess I scored a point that time.

EDNA. Where is your proof ?

MAX. Do you demand it ?

EDNA. I do.

MAX. Then listen. Four years ago your late uncle, Henry Morgan, went into a heavy speculation, which compelled him to give security for fifty thousand dollars, and your father went on the bond for that amount. After your uncle's death your father became liable for the debt. I held the security, and would have pushed the matter long ago, only for the interference of my young friend, Frank Montgomery. For reasons of our own, I esteem him as a brother, and when he pleaded with me to spare your father this dreadful blow, on the ground that you would soon be his wife, I promised that the day you were wed to him I would convey to him all right and title to the claim. Now does it look as if there was cause for reconsideration?

EDNA. Have you any tangible proof of all this?

MAX. I have. Go ask your venerable sire if he ever signed such a security, and ask him if to his certain knowledge it was ever released.

EDNA. Sir, if what you tell me is the truth, God knows what the result will be; I can never be the wife of Frank Montgomery.

MAX. Stick to it, young lady; it's all the better for me if you don't marry him.

EDNA. It seems very strange that father never mentioned this to us.

MAX. Your father, no doubt, thinks the matter was settled by his brother long before his death; you had better see him and ask him about it; but if you regard his feelings don't tell him a word till you have given the matter more serious thought; it will be a hard blow for the old gentleman. I'm going for a stroll now. I trust I've made matters plain, and shall expect to see you later.

[*Raises his hat, exits, R. 1 E.*]

EDNA (*supporting herself against rustic seat*). Oh, have I merited all this, and can I suffer this agony of suspense alone! Why did I ever speak to that man! (*Starts to leave, R. U. E., and meets MRS. MORGAN entering.*)

MRS. M. Why, my child, what is the matter? Are you ill?

EDNA (*putting her arms around her mother's neck*). 'Tis nothing of any consequence, mother. Can we return home soon?

MRS. M. Why certainly, child, if you are not well. Can't you explain to mother what is the trouble?

EDNA. Please do not ask me, mother. We will walk on the beach; perhaps I will feel better.

BESSIE (*in hammock*). Oh auntie, here comes Pete with the lunch! Can't we have dinner now?

MRS. M. We will return directly, my dear.

[*Exits with EDNA, R. 1 E.*]

PETE (*heard outside, R.*). Whoa dar, Lemuel, whoa dar! Doan you go for to git on your high heel boots kaze ye come to de white folks' picnic. Back dar, Lemuel, back, sah! (*Mule heard kicking outside. Some splinters should be thrown on stage*)

from R., as if it were from the dash-board.) Whoa dar, mule! Now look what you do. You done gone broke de cart. How you spoze we gwan to tote de taters wid de dash-board all kicked out? (PETE brings in a large box, which he places in centre of stage; also basket of wine bottles.) Dar, chiln, am youah dinah. Ole Dinah say dem am de bestest fried chickens she done make fo' de las' yeah. Help youself, chiln, help youself, an' ef dar am any lef' doan forget de ole man.

MIGGIE. All right, Pete; we will save you a nice lunch.

PETE. Dat's right, honey; dat's right. I'ze gittin' pow'ful hungry.

BESSIE. Pete, you may have the wish-bone if you like.

PETE. Yah! Yah! All right, honey; doan forget to lof some of de chicken hang to de bone. (*Exit, R. Business of driving away heard.*) Glang now, Lemuel! By golly, yo' doan git no dinnah fo' whole week! I have to sell de corn to mend de dash-board. Go on now, Lemuel!

BESSIE (*climbing out of the hammock*). Come, Miggie, let's see what Aunt Dinah has sent us. I'm awful hungry; aren't you?

MIGGIE. Yes; I'm always hungry when I come to a picnic.

Enter MIKE, L. C.

MIKE. So am Oi. Oi'm that hungry Oi cud ate a cold baked petata av it war bilt wid the palin's on. (*Calling off, R.*) Oh, ho, over there! Lave that game of croka alone till ye come an' ate yer lunch.

BESSIE. Say, Mr. Mike, you promised to take Miggie and I for a row on the lake. Have you forgotten it?

MIKE. Oh, no, me lass; Oi didn't forgot it. Oi've a noice little row-boat that will just hold yersilf an' me. So afther lunch we'll be afther takin' a roide, and when we are back Oi'll take Miggie for a roide. De ye see?

BESSIE. Oh, my, won't the boat carry Miggie and I, too? It would be so nice to have her with me.

MIGGIE. I don't care to go, Bessie; I never like riding on the water.

BESSIE. Oh, I do, ever so much!

Enter MRS. MORGAN and EDNA, R. C.

MRS. M. Michael, why haven't you unpacked the lunch? You may go and tell those gentlemen to leave their game till after dinner.

MIKE (*going, R.*). Yes, mom. Oi'll tell the lads to come right away directly, if not sooner. [*Exits.*]

MIGGIE. Mrs. Morgan, shall I unpack the dinner?

MRS. M. Yes, Miggie; I'll assist you. (*Raises lid of box, and all scream loudly. MRS. MORGAN drops lid, and sits on rustic seat exhausted. The gents all rush on at R. with croquet mallets.*)

MORG. What is the matter, Mrs. Morgan? (*She points to box.*) Where, what is it? I don't see anything. (*The cover of box raises slowly; ladies all scream again. EPHREHAM puts his head out of box, wearing broad grin.*) (See NOTE.)

MIKE. Well, phat koind av a lunch de ye call thot, onyway? Come outen thot, ye baythen nayger.

MORG. What does this mean, you young rascal?

EPH. Daddy say dis chile can't come to de white folk's picnic, so I stealed a ride; dat's all.

MORG. Where is our dinner?

EPH. (*climbing out*). 'Spect it's home; I toted it inter de woodshed while daddy go fo' de mule.

ALL. In the woodshed! (*Laughter.*)

Enter PETE, R.

MORG. Pete, you old reprobate, why don't you thrash that young rascal?

PETE (*surprised*). Whar did you come from, you young fool niggah?

MORG. You brought him here in that lunch box.

PETE (*looking in box*). 'Tain't no use, Mars Morgan, 'tain't no use. Dat chile am boun' to bring his ole fadder down to de grave befo his time. (*To EPHREHAM.*) What foa you do dat, Ephreham? By golly, I tought dat dinnah tote mighty heavy!

BESSIE (*pointing to EPHREHAM*). Pete, there's your wish-bone.

PETE. I wish dat fool niggah nebber was born. (*EPHREHAM climbs in hammock and proceeds to blow mouth organ.*)

MORG. Pete, you may as well take the box and that cub of yours and go home.

PETE. Yes, sah. (*Takes up box and exits, R., followed by EPHREHAM playing mouth organ.*)

MAX. I ordered some excellent wine sent out, and as it seems to be here all right, we'll substitute it for the lost dinner. (*Opens bottles and fills glasses, which he hands to all but BESSIE.*)

MORG. This is a rough joke on us. However, I see no way but to make the best of it.

MIKE. When Dinah sends another nayger for our lunch Oi hope she'll 'ave him well roasted. Oi don't like raw naygers. (*Laughter.*)

BESSIE. Mike, am I to be cheated out of my ride on the lake?

MIKE. Oh no, me dear; ye'll have a foine ride on the wather. (*Takes glass of wine from MAXWELL, puts small powder in it unobserved, puts paper in his vest pocket, hands glass to BESSIE.*) Here, me lass, take a sip o' the wine fer yer stomach sake.

BESSIE. Oh, no, thank you; I never take wine.

MIKE. Ye'll be awful hungry afore ye get home, me lass, so yez betther take a drop to brace yez up a bit.

MRS. M. Drink just a little, Bessie; it won't hurt you. (BESSIE *takes glass.*)

MIKE (*taking glass*). That's roight, me lass. Here's to the lunch that's home in the woodshed.

MAX. I'll amend that toast.

Here's to the lunch that's home in the woodshed,

Likewise the darkey who came in its place;

Here's hoping that if ever he should repeat that trick on us,
He'll get kicked by the mule right square in the face.

(*All laugh and drink.*) [MAX *exits*, L. C.]

MIKE. Now, Bessie, me lass, here goes for a roide on the wather.

MRS. M. Bessie, you had better get your wraps as you pass the carriage; the air will be very cool on the water.

BESSIE. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. M. (*kissing BESSIE*). Mike, will you be very careful that nothing befalls her?

MIKE. That I will, mom. Come, me lass.

[*Exit BESSIE and MIKE*, R.]

MORG. Well, gentlemen, we may as well finish our game, if we are to have no dinner. Ladies, will you join us?

MRS. M. I think, if you will excuse us, we will go to the beach.

EDNA. Papa, may I speak with you alone? (*To Mrs. MORGAN.*) Mother, I will join you and Miggie on the beach directly.

MRS. M. Very well, my dear. Come, Miggie, we will walk on.

[MRS. MORGAN and MIGGIE *exit*, R.]

MORG. Well, daughter, what is it?

EDNA (*sitting on rustic bench*). Come and sit by me, will you? (*He sits.*) Papa, I hope you won't think me inquisitive or meddling with what doesn't concern me. I wish to ask you a question, but first I must request you not to ask my motives; I will tell you later.

MORG. You are speaking in riddles, daughter. What is this you wish to know?

EDNA. Papa, did you ever sign a bond of security for any considerable amount with Uncle Henry?

MORG. Yes; for a large sum, but he redeemed our pledge long before his death.

EDNA. Have you any positive proof of that?

MORG. I have your uncle's word for it, and feel as satisfied as if I had been present at the transaction. I think Mr. Montgomery also knows it to be a fact.

EDNA. Papa, I fear some one has made a grave mistake. Will you find Mr. Montgomery at once, and ascertain his knowledge in the matter? (MONTGOMERY *enters*, R. U. E., *in time to hear last.*)

MORG. I wish you would explain yourself. Has any one intimated that I am involved?

MONT. (*coming forward*). Beg pardon, Mr. Morgan. (*Raises hat to EDNA.*) Have you any positive knowledge that your brother settled that matter?

MORG. I have my brother's word.

MONT. Nothing but his word?

MORG. (*starting up*). Sir, would you dare intimate that Henry Morgan was dishonest?

MONT. I dare *intimate, sir*, that the claim was *never* liquidated, notwithstanding what your brother may have told you to the contrary. As his confidential clerk I claim to know the facts.

MORG. My God, man, if this be true I am ruined! Montgomery, this thing is utterly impossible. Why haven't the claims been presented?

MONT. Because a friend has interested himself in your behalf and postponed matters.

MORG. What friend, pray tell me, is so much interested in my behalf?

MONT. Mr. Morgan, when I can see you alone I will tell you more, but not now. (*Starts to leave, L. C.*)

MORG. Stay; I must know at once. (*To EDNA.*) Daughter, pray leave us (*Confidential, as she is leaving.*) Don't let this matter dishearten you; I am sure there is some mistake. (*She exits, R. To MONTGOMERY.*) Now, who is my friend?

MONT. (*with mock politeness*). Your humble servant. Now listen to what you would never have known had not that misunderstanding come up last eve. You must have known that for a long time I have been deeply interested in your daughter, and I had formed the erroneous idea that she would consent to become Lady Montgomery. Our unpleasant interview last evening proved to the contrary.

MORG. Well, what does all this signify?

MONT. It signifies, sir, that in consequence of her refusal, you are left to meet the obligation, which would otherwise have been averted. You doubt my assertions. Well, here are the cold facts in the case. That obligation is held by a dear friend of mine. He purchased it from the bank with whom your brother did business.

MORG. Mr. Montgomery, you need go into no further detail; it's *too* thin to wash.

Enter MAXWELL, L. C.

MAX. Excuse me, gentlemen; I have overheard a part of your conversation, and will venture a little of the proof you wish. (*Takes papers from pocket and shows to MORGAN.*) Can you deny those signatures?

MORG. (*staggering back*). Oh, heaven, it's too true!

MAX. Now I will finish what my friend here has tried to ex-

plain to you. These bonds I purchased, as he stated, and I intended to have collected the amount some time ago, but Frank begged me to wait on the ground of his marriage with your daughter. I told him that the day Miss Edna was his wife I would present him with these papers. There's the business in a nutshell, and what you may say or think will not change matters one particle.

MORG. (*wiping the sweat from his forehead*). Gentlemen, I am an old man. I have worked hard to secure a little fortune and a home for my loved ones. I am what the world calls in good circumstances, yet this matter will leave me nearly penniless. I have nothing to do with my daughter's choice of a husband; if she gives her consent you have mine. If she declines your offer, I'll work these fingers to the bone ere she shall come to want. This is a hard blow, sir, but of little consequence compared with seeing your own child wedded for paltry gain.

MAX. Mr. Morgan, you are made of the right metal, and I'm going to do the square thing by you; there's no use to say more to the girl. I'm in no great hurry for the money—at least, all of it. You can pay me a part now, and take as much time as you like for paying the balance. Of course, you wouldn't mind giving security on your home?

MORG. You are generous, sir. This matter has completely unmanned me, but there is no use to fight against the inevitable. Give me a few days, and I will see what can be done. I think I can make a small payment at once, as I have some money by me.

MAX. Let me suggest, Mr. Morgan, that if you allow that Irish servant to carry the keys to your safe, you will never be troubled with the surplus, unless he is more honest than I believe him to be.

MORG. Michael has nothing to do with my financial matters or the keys to my safe.

MAX. Then he has deceived you, sir, for I saw him exploring the contents of your safe only a few evenings since.

MORG. Impossible, sir. Where were you?

MAX. I saw him enter your library in what appeared to me to be a stealthy manner, so I went outside and peeped in through the blinds, and saw him just closing the safe door; but supposing you had sent him there, I said nothing. Later I saw him counting over a roll of bills, by himself, at the stables.

MORG. Gentlemen, I am astonished; I supposed the fellow to be perfectly honest. I will investigate at once.

Enter MIGGIE, R., in great hurry.

MIGGIE. Oh, Mr. Morgan! come quick. We are afraid something has happened to Bessie. Mike has come back without her.

[*Exits, R.*]

MORG. (*starts to go and meets MIKE, L. U. E., feigning drunk; he grasps MIKE by the throat*). See here, you dirty villain, where is the child?

MIKE. Let go av me throat av ye want me to talk! De ye think Oi ken spake whin Oi'm throttled up loike a jug?

MORG. Didn't Bessie go on the lake with you?

MIKE. Oi don't know, sor; Oi think she did.

MORG. Then where is she?

MIKE. Oi don't know, sor.

MORG. (*shaking him*). For God's sake, man, don't drive me mad! Tell me, what has become of Bessie?

MIKE. Bedad, Oi told you! Oi don't know.

MAX. (*drawing pistol*). See here, you Irish devil! if you don't explain, we'll give you a taste of Texas law.

MIKE. How in the name av St. Patherick ken Oi explain, whin ye all kape yer jaws a-goin'? The choild wint out on the wather wid me fer a bit av a roide, an' whin Oi come back the lass war not in the boat. So Oi says to mesilf, says Oi, "Moike, the lass must av got out to walk on the wather!"

MORG. (*letting MIKE go*). Gentlemen, this is becoming unbearable. We must go and make a search for that child.

Enter JOHN, the boatman, R. U. F., followed by other sailors.

JOHN. Aye, Mr. Morgan, I believe there's mischief in the winds. This drunken lubber hired me boat fer a row on the waves wid the little gal, an' has come in widout her. When I axed him where was the little one, he said I should go to the devil. So I telephoned fer the police an' came to you.

MORG. What course did they take?

JOHN. Sou'east, sir; beyond the crags, where very few venture in small craft. I have sent me mates to explore, sir.

MAX. Where's the use to waste law on such a fellow? Let's hang him before the police arrive, if he don't tell. (SAILORS *echo*, "Hang him!")

MORG. Are you going to tell us where that child is?

MIKE. Ax me somethin' aisy, will ye?

JOHN. Lads, the monster ought to be stretched up to a yardarm. I'll get the rope, ef ye'll hoist his carcass aloft. (SAILORS *echo*, "Get the rope!") [JOHN *exits*, R.]

MAX. Bring on your rope, Mr. Morgan. Why don't you search this fellow? We may find some evidence of a crime.

MORG. Search him if you like.

MONT. (*searches him and finds roll of bills, which he hands to MORGAN*). Who is this man, that he carries all this wealth?

MORG. Michael, where did you get this?

MIKE. Why, sor; ain't that good money?

MORG. Gentlemen, this money is from my safe. I have been duped. [*Exits*, L. U. E.]

MAX. What is the use of wasting time on such a villain? Here comes the rope—let's use it.

Enter JOHN with rope, R. U. E.

JOHN. Aye, mates! the lads can find no trace of the gal.

MAX. (*taking rope and making noose*). We will hang the rascal to the first tree.

MIKE. Don't Oi 'ave somethin' to say about thot? Ye are a noice lad, to git a mon into a bad job, then hang him fer it.

MAX. Shut up! You've had your say about this matter, now it's our turn.

MONT. (*starting off, L. U. E.*). Come, boys! There is a convenient tree. (*Men all grasp rope, and MAXWELL tries to put loop over MIKE's head. POLICEMAN enters, R., followed by comrade, and calls in a loud voice.*)

POLICEMAN. Desist here. I'll shoot the first one who tries to lynch that man. (*Takes MIKE away from them. Picture formed as curtain drops.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Parlor at the home of ROBERT MORGAN, same as in Act II. As curtain rises PETE heard outside thrashing EPHREHAM, who bellows loudly. After business of whipping PETE heard.*

PETE. Now, den, am yo' gwan ter pesticate yo' ole fadder any moah? Look, now, how yo' spile yo' fadder's bes' coat wid whitewash.

EPH. I doan kere.

PETE. Yo' doan kere? Well, den, I gib yo' some moah. Heah, come back heah, sah! Look heah, boy, yo' kotch de debil when I git yo' agin.

PETE enters, c., with his coat badly smeared with whitewash.

PETE. By golly! dat coon am de worstest little debil I done seed fo' de las' forty yeahs. (*Striking an attitude.*) Look at ole Pete, den look at dem coat. I clare ter goodness ebberying around heah am gwan ter de dogs. Massa Morgan he am all broke up 'bout sumfin', Missus Morgan am sick in de bed, an' Missus Edna she look kinder lonesome ebber since de little gal war drowned at de white folks' picnic. I'ze de only tranquil one 'bout de place. Dat ole Hibernicum snoozer what stole Massa Morgan's money am gone up de flue, an' I done heah some white folks say dat he's gwine ter a necktie party nex' Septober. By golly! I wonder where de folks am gone! (*Calls loudly.*) Massa Morgan! Massa Morgan!

Enter ROBERT MORGAN, l. c., looking careworn and tired.

MORG. What is it, Pete?

PETE. Heah am a lettah fo' yo', sah.

MORG. (*taking letter*). Why, what is the matter with your clothing?

PETE (*looking at himself*). Dat young fool niggah, Ephreham, he git up on de high fence, an' when I come on de walk he turns de whitewash pail ober me. Now look at dese yar garments.

MORG. Never mind, Pete; there are worse things in the game of life than being whitewashed. I've got some bad news for you.

PETE. What am it, massa?

MORG. I am afraid you will be obliged to hunt a new home soon. (*Sits in easy-chair at table.*)

PETE. What am dat, massa? De ole man got ter look fo' new home? (*Pulls large red bandanna from pants pocket and begins to show emotion.*) Didn't I gib yo' honest work, massa?

MORG. Yes, Pete; I have no fault to find; you have been a good, honest fellow.

PETE. Am it on account ob dat coon Ephreham? I'll keep dat young niggah tied up ter home, massa.

MORG. Oh, no; the boy is mischievous, but that is nothing. The fact is, Pete, I expect to lose every dollar I am worth.

PETE. Lock de safe, massa, fore some one git in dar. (*EDNA stands in door, c., unobserved.*)

MORG. You don't understand me, Pete. I owe a great debt, which must be paid, and it will take every dollar I am worth, together with this home and the cottage where you live.

PETE. Fo' de good Lod sake, Massa Morgan, what will become ob ole Dinah an' de little chiluns?

MORG. I don't know, Pete; it is a serious matter.

PETE. I'ze got it, massa! Sell ole Pete. He will fotch one thousand dollars, an' I'ze good fo' de nex' forty yeahs.

MORG. Pete, slavery days are done away with, and were they not, I would never sell you unless forced to do so.

PETE. Say, massa, I'll sell de mule, an' Dinah am got four dollars, an' de chiluns am got some moah, an' yo' can hab it all.

MORG. Pete, you are an honest-hearted, simple-minded old fellow. I appreciate your willingness to make a sacrifice for me, but you don't comprehend the magnitude of this obligation. Keep your money, Pete; you will need it all for your wife and little ones. Leave me now.

PETE. Massa Morgan, you'ze been good ter dis yar ole man an' Dinah, an' we doan like ter lebe ye; but doan worry 'bout us, massa; de good Lod will care fo' ole Pete, an' we'll come out all right; doan worry for us, massa. [*Exits, L. 1 E.*]

MORG. (*opens and reads letter.*)

LOUISVILLE, KY., Sept. 10.

Robert Morgan, Esq.

DEAR SIR: As the time draws near for a settlement, and having heard nothing from you direct, I have made arrangements to be at your place this afternoon, and will bring a magistrate with me, so that we may expediate business. I shall expect at least half the amount of your indebtedness down, the balance in three years, with good security, bearing interest. Please be in readiness, as Mr. Montgomery and myself wish to take the evening train for New York.

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS MAXWELL.

(Crushing letter.) My God, I am ruined.

EDNA (comes quickly forward and kneels at his side). You are not forsaken, father. God will be your friend if you will trust him.

MORG. (stroking her hair). Yes, daughter, I will try to use reason, for we must live in some way. Were it only myself I would not mind it; but when I know that my loved ones must soon be paupers it nearly drives me wild. (Buries his face in his hands and sobs.)

EDNA (caressing him). Poor, dear father, this is a dreadful blow for you! I cannot believe Uncle Henry ever intended this matter would make you trouble, can you?

MORG. No, daughter, a thousand times no! My brother was the very soul of honor.

EDNA. Father, does mamma know the worst?

MORG. No; I have not dared to tell her. She is just recovering from the effect of Bessie's death, and this blow would kill her. And yet it will be impossible to keep her in ignorance of the fact after to-day.

EDNA. Father, I will save you, and will become the wife of Frank Montgomery.

MORG. No, no, daughter: better is it for us to starve in the street than that you throw your life away and live in a palace.

EDNA. Father, I think Frank Montgomery loves me, and would try to make me happy.

MORG. But, Edna, daughter, do you love Frank Montgomery?

EDNA (holds to chair as if slightly faint; appears to be trying to say yes; then straightening up). No; I can't lie to you, father. I despise him!

MORG. Then you shall never be his wife.

EDNA. Father, leave the matter with me to decide. I will do that which is for the best.

Enter PETE, c.

PETE. Massa Morgan, de debil am close by. Maxwell an' Montgomery am come, an' want ter see de boss, an' dar am anoder fellah wid dem.

MORG. Pete, show Mr. Montgomery and the stranger into the library, and bring Mr. Maxwell to me.

PETE. Show Mr. Maxwell ter Mr. Montgomery an' de stranger, an' bring yo' ter de library.

MORG. No, Pete; you don't understand me. I wish to see Maxwell alone.

PETE. Oh, yas; show Massa Maxwell to yo', an' bring de library ter Montgomery an' de odder stranger.

[Exits, c., quickly.]

EDNA. I do not wonder that the poor fellow gets things mixed to-day.

MORG. No, indeed; I don't know what will become of him after this crash. I wish you would leave the room now, Edna.

EDNA. Yes, papa; and let me beg of you, for mamma's sake, don't get discouraged, no matter how embarrassing the situation or how severe his terms.

MORG. (*sitting centre*). How little we appreciate the blessings of this world until we are deprived of them! Little did I think one month ago that in four short weeks not only would our Bessie be lying in a watery grave, but that we should be homeless and out in the street. (*Voice of BESSIE heard above him.*) Have courage, Uncle Robert, and all will be well.

MORG. (*rising and starting wildly, then peers in every corner*). Hark! That's little Bessie's voice. (*Calls.*) Bessie! Bessie! Can it be my poor disordered brain? (*Puts his hands to head.*) That was certainly her voice. (*Listens and calls softly.*) Bessie—where—are—you?

Enter MAXWELL and PETE, c.

MAX. Good-day, Mr. Morgan.

MORG. (*starting violently*). Silence, sir! You are not worthy to speak in the same room with that angel child.

PETE (*coming to MORGAN*). Massa Morgan, am yo' sick? Dis am Massa Maxwell.

MORG. (*sitting*). Oh, excuse me, Mr. Maxwell! I forgot myself, I guess. Pray be seated. Do you believe in ghosts?

MAX. (*sitting on sofa*). I can't say that I do. No, sir.

PETE (*peering into corner*). Oh, Lod, massa, am dar any ghosts round heah?

MORG. I heard Bessie Morgan's voice as distinct as I ever heard her speak.

PETE (*shaking*). Did—did—did yo' seed her, Massa Morgan? Whar war she?

MORG. What's the matter, Pete; are you cold?

PETE. No, sah; I'ze—i'ze skert, dat's all.

Enter MIGGIE quickly, c., and as PETE finishes last sentence she touches him on the shoulder; he springs high in the air and screams.

PETE. Oh Lod, I'ze a dead niggah dis time!

MIGGIE. Why, Pete, what's the matter with you?

PETE. Lor', missy, you mos' kill de ole man dat time. I clar ter goodness I tout yo' am a ghost, shuah.

MIGGIE. Well, Dinah has been calling to you from the kitchen for an hour, and if you don't come there will be a black ghost around here soon. [*Exits, c.*]

PETE (*going*). I clar ter gracious goodness I feel like I war turnin' white. I nebber did like ghosts.

MAX. Mr. Morgan, I am sorry to trouble you further on this

matter, and wish it might be otherwise. I am afraid these matters are having a bad effect on your nervous system.

MORG. Sir, I care nothing for myself, but it's hard to see those near and dear to me turned out of home, and I not be able to buy even a tent to cover their heads. I tell you, sir, words cannot express the horrors of this hour. My wife has not been apprised of the matter as yet, and I fear to tell her. Can't you wait just a few days until she is stronger?

MAX. Couldn't do it, Mr. Morgan, though I would like to accommodate you; but I must leave for home to-night, and I wish this matter closed up before I go.

MORG. Have you no feeling for those in distress? Take what money I have by me, and give me time to turn myself and prepare so much as a humble cottage for my family.

MAX. I have as much sympathy for you as any one could have under existing circumstances. Why didn't your daughter accept the offer made by Mr. Montgomery? Then all would have been well.

MORG. Slavery has been abolished in this country, Mr. Maxwell. Do you think I would sell my daughter even to save my home?

MAX. Very well, sir; you know the alternate.

MORG. Yes, too well. How much will you compel me to pay?

MAX. Twenty-five thousand dollars down and the other half in three years.

MORG. Maxwell, you know I can't make it.

MAX. Then, to save trouble and lawyers' bills, why not give me a deed of this property, and I will cancel the balance of the debt.

MORG. That is to say, after you have every cent a man possesses you will not take more. You are certainly *very* generous.

MAX. Well, what do you say?

MORG. My answer is *no!* If I am to lose all I possess it will be when the law compels me to give it up.

MAX. Very well. I have come prepared, and will commence proceedings at once, though the former way would be less public.

MORG. Maxwell, give me a few moments to collect my thoughts and break this dreadful news to my wife. I would like her counsel.

MAX. Very well; go and talk with your wife. I will wait here till your return. (MORGAN *exits*, L. C.) There goes another man tied to a woman's apron-string.

Enter MONTGOMERY, C.

MONT. Well, Tom, you are getting on swimmingly. If the old duffer will only give a deed instead of going to law! But say, Tom, I saw the girl a few moments since, and she asked

for an interview. You just take a stroll out, and I'll remain here. It's my opinion she has repented and wants to make up.

MAX. No doubt that's her object. A woman wouldn't be in her proper sphere if she couldn't quarrel one day and make up the next. Well, I'm off for a stroll. Don't wear the knees of your trousers out kneeling to her. Keep a stiff upper lip, and you will catch her twice as soon. [*Exits, c.*]

EPH. (*heard outside calling to MAX.*). Heah, yo' white man, whar am dat ten centses dat I owe you? I want dat ten centses.

MONT. (*soliloquizing as he sits in easy-chair and lights a cigarette*). That's right, young man, get your ten cents if you can; that's what we are all after in this world. If it were not for the almighty dollar I wouldn't be in this muddle, and if I were well out of it the wealth could go to the dogs. If it were not for that villain Maxwell, I would throw myself on the mercy of Robert Morgan and confess all; but Tom has led me on from one degree of crime to another, until our list of felony is complete. Drinking, gambling, cheating, stealing, perjury, and (*in a hoarse whisper*) murder! (*EDNA enters, c. MONTGOMERY starts as he hears her step, then rising makes a low bow, and motions her to the chair.*) Please be seated, Miss Morgan. (*He sits on sofa, she in chair.*)

EDNA. Mr. Montgomery, are you in doubt as to the nature of this interview?

MONT. I am somewhat surprised that you would speak to me at all after the unpleasant termination of our last interview.

EDNA. Extreme cases call for extreme remedies. I am here from necessity, *not* from choice.

MONT. Indeed!

EDNA. Frank, you once claimed to be my true friend.

MONT. I did, and am yet in all that the word implies. Can I be of any service to you?

EDNA. Tell me, Frank, is there no way to stay this terrible avalanche of sorrow that is about to sweep us from our home? Is there no avenue of escape?

MONT. (*rising*). Yes, Edna; but you have declined to accept it.

EDNA. I know, Frank, but would you take a wife who has no love in her heart for you?

MONT. (*standing by her side*). Edna, you have asked the question, I will be candid with you. I would much prefer one who would return my love. I think, however, that by striving to make your life happy I could win your respect, and in time you would learn to love me. But frankly, Edna, since our late unpleasantness I have dismissed the matter, and have tried to forget that I ever cared for you. I think we were both too hasty that day.

EDNA. Yes, it is human to err.

MONT. But divine to forgive. Nevertheless, what is done now must be done quickly. If you wish to reconsider your verdict and save your family from the street, I will give you another opportunity.

EDNA (*leaning back and closing her eyes*). Let me think for a moment, Frank; my brain is in a whirl.

MONT. (*takes a turn around the room, slowly looking at pictures, etc., then goes to centre and motions to imaginary person, then comes to EDNA*). Well, Edna, we must be brief if there is anything further. My friend Maxwell is coming.

EDNA (*starting*). Frank, I cannot deceive you. I have *no love for you*, and you wrong yourself when you marry me. I am frank with you. I will marry you to save my dear parents from the street. Do you accept the situation?

MONT. I do, Edna, for I know you will learn to love me in time.

EDNA. God grant it may be so! When must the ceremony take place?

MONT. Choose your own time.

Enter MAXWELL, C.

MAX. Ah! am I intruding?

MONT. Not in the least; you are just in time to congratulate me. Miss Edna has reconsidered her answer, and will become Lady Montgomery.

MAX. A very wise decision, indeed! When does the happy event take place?

MONT. I have left that matter with her to decide. When will it be, my dear?

EDNA (*starting as if from a dream*). Oh, I beg pardon. I should prefer Christmas.

MAX. On the contrary, my dear young lady, the wedding must be this very day, if you wish to avail yourselves of my offer.

EDNA (*covers her face in agony*). Oh, Mr. Maxwell, have mercy!

MONT. (*winking at MAXWELL*). And why to-day, Maxwell? You know she or her friends are not prepared.

MAX. I can't help that, my boy; "delays are dangerous." I must leave on the night train for New York, and I propose to have these matters disposed of, in one way or another, before I go. If you are married, then these documents will pass to you as a wedding gift from me; if not, they go to the courts.

MONT. Maxwell, you are rather exacting. Won't you give us till to-morrow?

MAX. (*looking at his watch*). Not another hour; I ought to be at my hotel now. I have delayed this matter too long already.

EDNA. Let it be so, Frank. (*Rising and leaning on chair*

for support.) I will go and find mother and father. (*Goes slowly, c.*)

MAX. Cheer up, young lady; it's only once in a lifetime. We have a magistrate here with us, and can be ready at any time.

EDNA (*looks imploringly to MONTGOMERY*). Frank, cannot we even have a minister?

MONT. The time will not permit, Edna. (*EDNA exits, c.*) Tom, you would make a splendid slave-driver; you have no heart.

MAX. Driving slaves is nothing compared to breaking the will of a stubborn woman. In either case, they will give you "back talk" till they find you are boss; then they will be as meek as Moses.

MONT. You must have had some experience, Tom.

MAX. Well, yes; I have three living wives and two dead ones. My last was the only successful contract out of the five.

MONT. How so, Tom?

MAX. She was killed in a railroad accident, and I got four thousand dollars damage. Now, I'm going to the library and get the magistrate.

MONT. How can we explain the matter to him?

MAX. Oh, you poor tenderfoot! Leave that to me, and ask no questions.

Enter PETE, c.

PETE. Am Massa Morgan, heah?

MAX. No. What do you want of him?

PETE. Dinah say de dinnah am 'bout ready. (*Starts to leave, c.*)

MAX. Come back here, you old reprobate.

PETE. Who yo' call crowbate, white man?

MAX. Are those the best clothes you have?

PETE. No, sah; Ize got some meetin'-house clothes.

MAX. Well, go and put on your "meetin'-house" clothes and come back. Try and wash some of that black from your hands and face.

PETE (*holding up hands*). Dem am fast colors, boss, dey won't wash off. What yo' want ob me? Am yo' de new boss?

MAX. Yes; now get a move on you.

PETE. O Lawd, help dis yer pooh niggah. [*Exits, c.*]

MAX. (*going*). Now, my boy, brace up and prepare to put on your sweetest smile. If there is anything I dislike to see, it's a bridegroom with a long face.

MONT. Maxwell, please don't joke. I feel too serious to enjoy puns.

MAX. Shall I bring some splints for your knees? [*Exits, c.*]

MONT. (*sitting*). Dem my buttons, I wish I were well out of this scrape.

Enter MORGAN, C., supporting MRS. MORGAN, who should look pale and haggard. MONTGOMERY rises to receive them.

MRS. M. Frank Montgomery, will you be kind enough to explain this terrible state of affairs?

MONT. Mrs. Morgan, I do not know how much of these matters have been disclosed to you.

MRS. M. I understand we are to take our choice between loosing our home or our daughter.

MONT. Exactly so, Mrs. Morgan; and it is Edna's choice to become my wife and save the home.

MRS. M. I comprehend, and all my husband or I can say does not change her purpose. There is intrigue somewhere, I know it; and, Frank Montgomery, if I find you have used unlawful means in this matter, I will follow you night and day until I have avenged my child's wrongs.

MORG. Be calm, mother; we will hope for the best.

MONT. There is no need of all this worry, Mrs. Morgan. Your daughter will be well cared for, and in time you will be glad that she is happy with me.

MRS. M. Why this hasty marriage?

MONT. My friend Maxwell is a very eccentric and peculiar man, and, like many others of his standing, proposes to have matters his own way, and he offers to present me with these papers only on condition that we are wed before he leaves to-day.

MRS. M. I fail to understand his motives.

Enter EDNA, C. Comes down and puts her arms around her mother's neck.

EDNA. Come, mamma, cheer up; now, there is no use to fight against the inevitable. God has ordained it thus or it would not be so.

MRS. M. Daughter, my heart is breaking. I know you are not happy.

EDNA. Mother, where is Miggie?

MRS. M. I could not say, Edna. She disappeared early this morning, and I am greatly concerned at her absence.

EDNA. Will our trouble never cease!

Enter MAXWELL and PETE, C. MR. and MRS. MORGAN sit on sofa and EDNA in easy-chair.

MAX. My friends, are you ready for the ceremony?

MORG. (*rising*). Mr. Maxwell, I am ill at ease over this matter. I can see no reason for all this haste.

MAX. Sir, this matter has been canvassed both *pro* and *con*.

These young people have wisely agreed to be united before I leave. If you object, make it known now, before the magistrate is called in, as he knows nothing of the circumstances. Pete, show the gentleman in from the library.

PETE. Yes, sah.

[*Exits, c.*]

MORGAN *sits*. MRS. MORGAN *lays head on MORGAN'S shoulder and weeps*; EDNA *puts handkerchief to face*. *After a pause enter PETE, followed by SQUIRE SNYDER.*

MAX. Squire, we are ready for the ceremony. These young people wish to be joined in wedlock.

SNYDER (*to MONTGOMERY*). Is that the wish of you both?

MONT. It is, sir. (*Leads EDNA to L. C. MR. and MRS. MORGAN stand.*)

SNYDER. You will please join hands. (*They join.*) If there be any one present who can show just cause why this couple should not be made man and wife, let them speak now, or forever after hold their peace.

MIKE (*appears quickly at c. in custody of two officers and calls loudly*). Sthop! Oi ferbid this marriage.

MAX. The devil you do. (*Springs for MIKE. FIRST OFFICER presents pistol, and taking MAXWELL by the collar, puts him back to place and stays by him.*)

SNYDER (*to MIKE*). Why this intrusion, sir?

MIKE. To sthop this divelish work, sor. It's all fraud, an' the varmint desarve to be hung, so they do.

EDNA leaves MONTGOMERY and goes to her mother's arms.

MONT. (*starting toward MIKE*). Take that back or I'll kill you. (*SECOND OFFICER shoves him back to place and stays with him.*)

SNYDER. Give your reasons, sir, for this boisterous intrusion.

MIKE. Oi am here, sor, to accuse these men av conspiracy to murther Bessie Morgan, an' in plannin' a false marriage to defraud Miss Edna out of her inheritance.

MAX. Where are your proofs, sir?

MIKE. Didn't ye hire a poor Irishman to murther the choild, an' pay him with money which ye sthole from Mr. Morgan's safe?

MAX. Squire Snyder, will you demand that that crazy devil be taken back to prison, where he belongs?

SNYDER. On the contrary, sir, I propose to hear him through. Go on with your charges.

MIKE. The divils came til me sometime ago, an' offered me foive thousand dollars to murther the choild. Knowin' that the varmint wad do the deed thimselves ave Oi didn't, Oi tuk the job.

SNYDER. And committed the murder ?

MIKE. No, sor; Oi niver confised thot. Oi tuk the choild out on the wather, an' landed her wid a friend up the beach. Oi knew the divils were playing their kerds for the choild's money, so Oi just wint pacebly to jail an' let thim hang thim-selves.

MAX. Out on such a flimsy lie! If this be true, let him produce the child.

MIKE. Yis, sor; here she be. (*BESSIE and MIGGIE run quickly in at c. BESSIE runs quickly to Mrs. MORGAN and EDNA; business of caressing and kissing. As BESSIE enters, all exclaim as follows, and in unison.*)

MORG. My God! there is Bessie.

MAX. The devil!

MONT. Tom, look at that; we our lost.

MRS. M. Our own Bessie.

EDNA. Thank God!

PETE (*after the rest*). Bress de Lawd.

SNYDER (*giving MIKE his hand*). Well done, my man. Have you anything more to say ?

MIKE. Yis, sor. Oi denounce Tom Maxwell an' Frank Montgomery fer the wilful murther av Lord Burton, an' the attempted murther av Henry Morgan, av Neyoirk, an' orther the arrist av the two av them.

MAX. Squire, this is a villainous trap which this rascal is trying to get us into. We are old enemies, and he does this for revenge and without better proof than his word. I question your right to detain us.

SNYDER. Have you any further proof of their guilt, other than your word ?

MONT. What is the fool's word good for ?

MIKE (*pulling off wig and beard quickly*). Do you question my word, Frank Montgomery ?

BESSIE (*screams*). My papa! (*Runs to MIKE [now HENRY MORGAN], who takes her in his arms, etc. Friends all rush forward, and congratulations follow in natural way.*)

MIKE. Yes, kind friends, I am Henry Morgan. My reasons for masquerading in this manner are briefly told: I did it that these two wretches might be caught in their own trap. Three years ago my old friend, Lord Burton, was foully murdered at my home in New York. I suspected that my then confidential clerk, Frank Montgomery, had a hand in the crime. Later on, he lured me to the pier with a decoy letter purporting to come from a friend of mine, the captain of the schooner Denmark, then lying at anchor out in the bay. When at the pier, I hired that rascal (*pointing to MAXWELL*) to row me to the vessel, supposing him to be an ordinary boatman; but when we were well out on the bay, surrounded by a dense fog, he fired at me but missed. Knowing that the act would be

repeated, I dropped quickly in the water; and he, supposing me dead, turned about and pulled for shore, while I swam to the end of the first pier, and climbed out unharmed other than getting a good wetting; and knowing well that their villainy was not ended, I concluded to disguise and watch their little game of intrigue through, which I have done to my satisfaction. And when I have recovered from Maxwell that document of obligation now in his possession, and from Montgomery that receipt for the payment of the same which he purloined from my private papers, I will consign the two innocents to the watchful care of the Pinkertons of New York, who have the clinching proof of their crime. Brother Robert (*taking his hand*), I owe you and your family an apology for keeping you in suspense for so long a time, also for Miggie's disappearance this morning. In order to have Bessie present to face these villains in their guilt, I confided to Miggie my plans, and quietly delivered the child to her keeping early this morning.

MIGGIE (*coming to MRS. MORGAN*). You will forgive me, won't you, Mrs. Morgan?

MRS. M. (*kissing her*). Certainly, my dear.

BESSIE (*laughing*). Uncle Robert, did you hear me call to you from the register up there (*points upward to ceiling*) in Miggie's room?

MORG. (*shaking her*). Yes, you little rogue; I thought it was a voice from the other world.

BESSIE. I wanted to say more to you, but Miggie pulled me away.

PETE (*to MAXWELL*). Say, Massa Maxwell, am yo' de new boss?

MAX. Shut up, can't you? Let good enough alone.

Enter EPHREHAM, C.

EPH. (*calls to MAXWELL*). Say yo', white man, I want dem ten centses.

MAX. (*to MONTGOMERY*). Montgomery, we're in the soup.

MONT. Yes, and this all comes from keeping bad company. I might have been an honored and respected citizen to-day had it not been for you.

MAX. Oh! don't lay it to me, pardy. It's all on account of that quart of poor whiskey.

MONT. Ladies and gentlemen, after the horse is stolen the barn must be locked. It's plain to be seen that this is not our lucky day.

PETE. Bress de Lawd!

MONT. Don't trust to appearances; they are deceitful. Let whiskey alone, for in each and every glass lurks a devil, though at the time you may mistake it for an angel. I can trace my downfall directly back to my first drink.

MAX. You took too large a dose, old boy.

MONT. Maxwell, how can you jest at such a time as this?

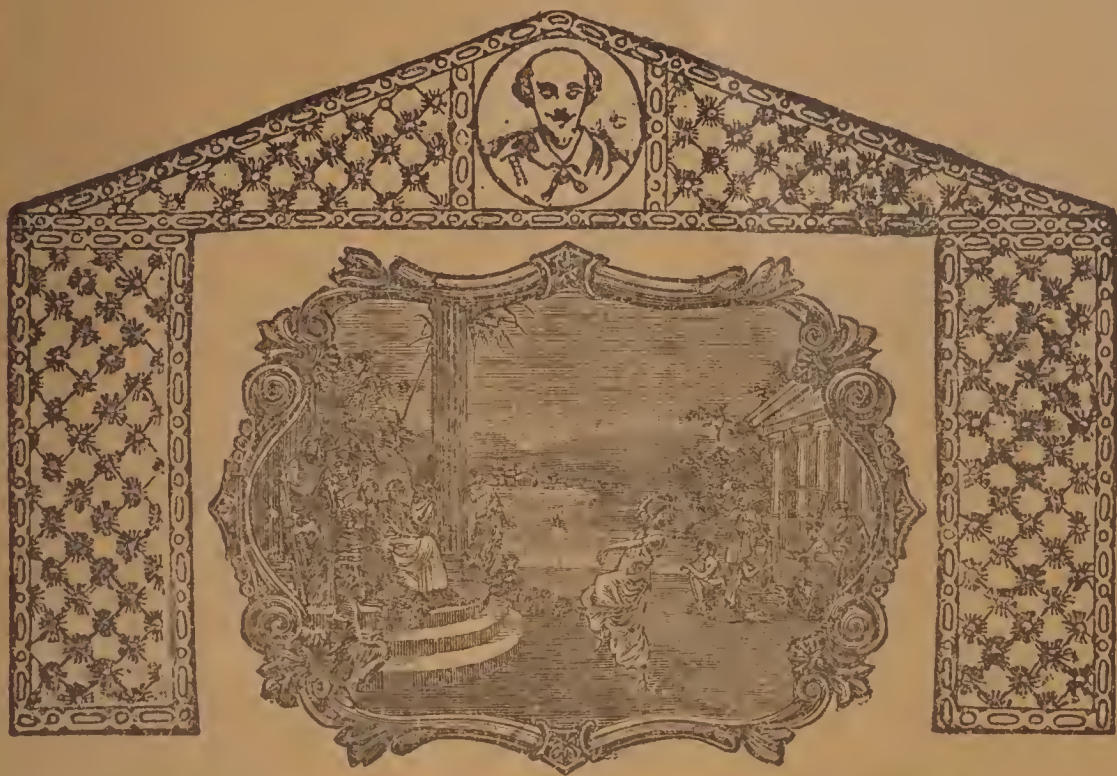
MAX. I saved two years by good behavior the last time I was up. It pays to be pleasant.

MONT. Maxwell, have you no regrets for your past career?

MAX. Just one, and I hope these friends will profit by my sad experience. Never put your trust in an Irishman who wears a wig.

PETE. Bress de Lawd!

CURTAIN.



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